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MENTAL HYGIENE.

MENTAL HYGIENE;

OR,

AN EXAMINATION

OF THE

INTELLECT AND PASSIONS.

DESIGNED TO SHOW

HOW THEY AFFECT AND ARE AFFECTED BY
THE BODILY FUNCTIONS,

AND THEIR

INFLUENCE ON HEALTH AND LONGEVITY.

BY

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PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE previous edition of the following work having been for some years exhausted, and frequent inquiries for it having been made of the author, he has taken advantage of his earliest leisure to prepare a second edition. In doing this he has re-written nearly the whole volume, and added to it a large amount of new matter. The division of the chapters is left the same as in the previous edition,—though each has been more or less enlarged—and the general arrangement of the subjects has not been essentially altered. That this edition will be found improved by the labors bestowed upon it, is a hope with which the author ventures to flatter himself, but on this point it is for others to decide.

Fort Washington, City of New-York,
August 6th, 1850.

INTRODUCTION.

WHATEVER speculative views we may entertain in regard to mind—however distinct in its nature we may deem it to be from matter—of the fact that it is essentially involved with our organic structure, and that between the two a reciprocation of influence is constantly and necessarily maintained, we are sufficiently assured. Of the mental constitution and its laws, we have not the faintest knowledge except as they reveal themselves through the medium of certain material conformations. Wherever these are discovered we are convinced that mind is, or has been, conjoined with them. Without such arrangements of matter, its astonishing phenomena have never been disclosed to us.

The mutual relationship and constant interchange of action subsisting between our mental and corporeal natures, can scarce have escaped even the most careless observation. Let the functions of either be disturbed, and more or less disorder will straightway be reflected to those of the other. The hardiest frame must suffer under the agita-

tions and afflictions of the mind; and the firmest mind cannot long remain unharmed amid the infirmities and sufferings of the body.

Mind and body ought always to be studied together, and under their mutual and necessary relationships, otherwise our views of the animal constitution will be limited and erroneous. It has been said, that the less we know of the corporeal, the more we fancy we know of the spiritual world; and the contrary is doubtless equally true. He whose researches are altogether physical, or altogether metaphysical, is very liable to become exclusively material, or exclusively spiritual in his views.

The leading design of the present volume, as implied in its title, is to elucidate the influence of intellect and passion upon the health and endurance of the human organization. The character and importance of this influence has, it is believed, been but imperfectly understood and appreciated by mankind at large. Few, we imagine, have formed any adequate estimate of the sum of bodily ills which originate in the mind. Even the medical profession, concentrating their attention upon the physical, are very liable to neglect the mental causes of disease, and thus are patients sometimes subjected to the harshest medicines of the pharmacopœia, the true origin of whose malady is some inward and rooted sorrow, which a moral balm alone can reach.

The work we are introducing will be divided into two Parts. Under the first we shall consider the intellectual operations in view of their influence upon the general functions of the body; but as their effects on the vital economy

are less forcibly marked, and less hazardous to its welfare than those belonging to the passions, only the smaller portion of the volume will be embraced by this division.

The Second Part will comprise a view of the moral feelings or passions in the relation which they also bear to our physical nature. Of these we shall, in the first place, offer a general definition, and such a classification of them as will be deemed necessary to our leading design. Next we shall point out their effects upon the different functions of the constitution; and then describe some of the most important of the individual passions belonging to the three great classes—pleasurable, painful, and mixed—into which it is proposed to separate them; thus taking occasion to examine more intimately their physical phenomena, and particular influence on the well-being of the human organism. And then we shall make some remarks upon the effects of the imagination; aiming to show how this faculty of the mind, when uncontrolled and disorderly, tends to weaken the nervous system, and injure the general health. The imagination here acting through the instrumentality of the passions morbidly excited by its licentious operation, such a consideration of it will not be inapposite to the design of the present treatise.

As the work before us is not addressed to any particular class of readers, technical expressions will be carefully avoided, and its matter be rendered as plain and comprehensible as the nature of the subject will allow. And as truth, so far at least as the author can penetrate his own feelings, is its grand aim; all mystical speculations and

ungrounded theories, whether of a metaphysical or moral nature, will be scrupulously excluded from its pages.

Such, then, is a summary exposition of the plan and purpose of the present volume, and the author has only to hope that the principles advocated in it may not be wholly unprolific of good, and that it may subserve, in a measure at least, the great end for which it was prepared.

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PART FIRST.

INTELLECTUAL OPERATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

MAN'S INTELLECTUAL NATURE BRIEFLY COMPARED WITH THAT OF THE ANIMALS NEXT BELOW HIM IN THE SCALE OF LIFE.

MAN is distinguished from all other known animals, not only by his peculiar conformation of body—by his erect and dignified attitude—but by a far higher measure of intellectual endowment, and a consequently greater extension of his relations with external things. Remarkable, however, as this superiority of our species certainly is, still may it be questioned if, through human pride, it has not been something exaggerated, or a broader separation between us and the lower animals been assumed than Nature herself will acknowledge. Thus, by some metaphysical writers, all glimmerings of the higher mental faculties have been denied to brutes, and all their acts been ascribed to the direct impulse of a resistless instinct. This is evidently wrong; certainly in the physiological meaning of the word instinct. The simple animal instincts may be defined to be peculiar, inward feelings, or sensations originating urgent wants or desires, which stimulate or call forth certain muscular actions, whose purpose or end is, by satisfying the want, to re-

lieve the sensation that excited it; the series of physical actions produced being always understood to take place independent of education or imitation, and without any foresight of the end to be attained by them. Or, to put the definition in another form: Instincts consist in particular physical conditions, and consequent sensations, impelling to some definite train of muscular movements, which contribute or are essential to the preservation of the individual, or the continuance of the species, and thus grow out of the "stimulus of necessity." Abundant examples illustrative of the foregoing definitions of instincts might be adduced, but the appetites of hunger and thirst will be sufficient for our purpose. These instinctive wants or desires are originated or excited by physical conditions of the stomach, or system at large, which demand the supply of food and drink, and thereby serve as monitors to solicit the co-operative acts requisite to furnish such supply. Hence animals, so soon as born, and independent, therefore, of either education or imitation, go through, and as perfectly as ever afterward, all those complicated muscular movements needful to meet the calls of nutrition. Instinctive feelings, when simple and uncontrolled, almost uniformly elicit instinctive actions.

Simple, undiscerning, undeviating instinct—admitting such an unmixed principle—can obviously only exist in the humblest forms of animal life, as the *invertebrata*. In the lowest, even, of the *vertebrata*, or vertebral animals—those furnished with a spinal marrow and internal bony system—some faint glimmerings of an intelligent principle begin to show themselves, mingling with, modifying and exercising

some evident dominion over the mere instinctive operations. It is in this division of the animal kingdom that we begin to discover variations in individual character, in intelligence, in temper, &c.; and the higher we ascend in it, the greater is the degree of such variations. "Thus every one knows that there are stupid dogs and good-tempered dogs, as there are stupid men or good-tempered men. But no one could distinguish between a stupid bee and a clever bee, or between a good-tempered wasp and an ill-tempered wasp, simply because all their actions are prompted by an unvarying instinct."*

Ascending in this division of animate being, we find the intelligent principle, with the faculty of reasoning, advancing, and apparently in correspondence with the development of the brain. And in man, whose brain is most fully developed—most complex in its fabric—the intellectual faculties are far more elevated than in any other example, as yet known, in animate nature. In him the instinctive propensities obviously become subject—though in different degrees in different individuals—to the nobler reasoning powers.

Instinct will, I think, be generally found in the inverse ratio of reason—the latter faculty rendering it less necessary to animal preservation. It ever seems to be proportioned to the necessities for it. In the infant, instinct being the more necessary in the absence of reason, we observe more obvious traces of it than in the adult, though feeble compared with what the young of the inferior ani-

* Carpenter's Human Physiology.

mals present. The human female shows undeniable evidences of a necessary instinct, in her strong love for her offspring on the instant of its birth, and sometimes even before its birth; in her impulsive desire to nourish it; her ceaseless care in its preservation, and her indomitable energy in its defence from danger. Unless her nature be perverted by disease, or entirely depraved by vice, the human can at first no more escape such instinctive feelings than the brute mother. But in the latter, they are transient—lasting only while their young need their protection; and, in some, they are evinced merely by the careful preparation for the welfare of their offspring before they come into existence; whereas, in the former, they soon becoming mingled with, modified, widened and strengthened, by feelings and principles far more exalted—of a moral and intellectual character—we have, growing out of such combination, the most devoted, the most enduring, the most self-sacrificing of all human affections—*a mother's love.*

In the savage condition of man, especially as witnessed in the inferior races, the instinctive propensities are more marked, active, dominant, than in his state of civilization and intellectual advancement. In individual men, too, it will appear as a general truth, that the more eminently developed are the higher faculties of the mind, the less will be the instinctive manifestations.

In living nature, all naturalists, I believe, admit, that there exists something like a gradually ascending chain, rising from the humblest plant, passing through the zoophyte, or transition link, to the animal scale, and so up-

ward to man—its highest limit as yet disclosed to human intelligence. In tracing, too, this rising chain of life, it will be seen that structure and function ever advance in a corresponding relation—the general development of the former being an unerring measure of the perfection of the latter. Thus, on reaching the naturalist's second great division of the animal kingdom, *vertebrata*, or that to which belong a brain and spinal marrow, we begin, as I previously remarked, to discover, in addition to the simple instinct which probably alone governs the lower or brainless animals, some faint evidences of powers of a higher mould, and which grow more and more clear, in proportion as the organization, particularly of the brain, approaches nearer and nearer to that of our own. Hence, in the class of animals whose brain and general nervous system most closely resemble man's, do we detect the rudiments of nearly all the human mental faculties, and consequently an approximation, imperfect, to be sure, still an obvious approximation to a rational nature. Although this gradation in the vegetable and animal kingdom—this gradual rise from the humblest to the loftiest organic forms—is sufficiently obvious in its general features, yet it cannot be denied that, in its particular parts, it will sometimes be found less direct and simple than might be inferred from the statements of many naturalists. Still, that there is a general, and mostly an easy advance in organic structure and function, will scarce be contradicted.

A question here presents itself, How widely is man removed from the most manlike of the inferior animals? Do

his reasoning powers differ from those of the latter in degree only, or in kind? Is he raised in his nature out of the pale of the animal kingdom? Is there no easy gradation to the human link in the chain of life, or is the breach wider here than at any other point? Or may not the step from the highest race of the ape to the most humble of our own, be really easier than human pride has been generally willing to acknowledge?

The Asiatic orang-outang, *simia satyrus*, both as respects structure and mental powers, would seem to claim as near a kindred to humanity, as any other known animal. It has been, I believe, hitherto found only in the Islands of Borneo and Sumatra, in the Indian Ocean. The Malays believe this animal to possess rational faculties, and the power of speech, which he cunningly avoids exercising lest he should be put to work,—the black races always regarding labor as a great punishment. Cuvier believed, and the opinion is not improbable, that the powerful pongo of Borneo, of whose courageous and manlike acts we have such marvellous accounts, is only the adult *simia satyrus*. The specimens of this animal that have been transported to Europe or the United States, having been all young, and falling victims to an ungenial climate and unsuitable food, before attaining their full physical or mental maturity, our knowledge of the utmost development of its capacities must consequently be but imperfect; still, even under such adverse circumstances as we have been able to contemplate these animals, have they astonished us by their display of the habits and feelings of our own nature. But the accounts given by travellers of

the orang-outang in its native condition, and its close imitations of the actions of man, even making the fullest allowance for exaggeration, excite our still higher wonder.

The chimpanzee, *simia troglodytes*, an African ape, would appear, from recent examinations made by naturalists, to approximate in structure and function even closer to the human species than the Asiatic orang-outang, to which we have just been alluding. How near, therefore, these remarkable animals in a propitious climate, and under a well devised plan of instruction, might be brought to the inferior races of mankind, our data are insufficient to warrant an opinion. Placed beside the cultivated European, the distinction both in their structure and mental endowments is broad indeed, but it becomes much lessened when the comparison is made, —and such is the only just one,—with the lowest of our own species, as the savage New Hollander or the Bosjesman Hottentot. But then man differs widely enough even from the most manlike of the brute creation, to warrant naturalists in not merely ranking him as a distinct species, but in placing him in a separate order. No one would now entertain the ridiculous notion of Monboddo and Rousseau, that man is nothing more than an ape, improved under moral and physical influences. Nor should I be willing to admit him, on the system of progressive development of Lamarck, and the author of the Vestiges of Creation, to be but a monkey advanced through this principle of development one step upward in the ascending scale of life; but I would rather choose to regard him as a species, from his primary creation, distinct from that of all other animate beings.

Man would appear, on the evidence of geology, to be among the latest, as he is the most perfect of organic creations. And it would almost seem as though nature, through successive destructions and new creations, had been progressively advancing in her living structures, gradually improving upon her early types, to the occupants of the present and last surface of our earth. According to the distinguished geologist Cuvier, the globe on which we dwell is composed of various layers or strata of rocks, those on which all the others rest being the most ancient, and of course representing the first or internal stratum. On this primitive stratum animals existed, but only of the lowest forms. Then upon this comes another layer, the surface of the primary, with all its inhabitants, having been overwhelmed by some dread convulsion. Here again, in the lapse of time, other living beings succeeded, but as is inferred from their abundant organic remains, of a somewhat more advanced construction. Thus has revolution after revolution been going on, each succeeded by new worlds of life, until we come to the present surface, or the alluvial deposits, —not the result of any grand convulsion,—in which the remains of animals now existing are alone discoverable. These views of Cuvier do not accord in all their points with those derived from more recent geological observations. The primary rocks have been found destitute of organic remains, and hence are called *azoic*, implying absence of life. There must then have been a period in the formation of our globe, when there was an entire destitution of both animal and vegetable life; and furthermore, the organic relics found in

some of the earlier geological formations, show a higher animal organization than is consistent with a regular or uniform progressive advancement in the scale of life. Still, it would seem to be true that at each new geological era, nature has made some general improvement on her previous animal structures, and that, therefore, on the present surface of the earth are found the most perfect and complicated, at the head of which stands man, the masterpiece of all earthly creations. He belongs alone to the present face of the globe, no fossil remains of him having ever been found in any of its older strata. He is the latest then, as well as the most perfect of the earthly works of creative power. Millions of ages, for aught we know, may have been spent in reaching the complicated organisms presented in man and other of the mammalia occupying the present face of the globe. And the inquiry cannot but come up in every reflecting mind: Is here the end, the consummation? Is the world finished? Has nature attained the summit of her scale? Have these mighty revolutions of foregone times now ceased, and is man therefore to continue the terrestrial master-touch of his Maker? Or, in the course of ages, may not yet another convulsion arise, desolating the present surface of the earth, and on the new one which succeeds, nature make a still further advance in animal life, and produce a race of beings as much excelling man as he does any prior creation? And yielding a little license to the fancy, may we not imagine the learned naturalists on this new crust, puzzling their wits over the fossil bones of our own proud race, and marvelling to what humble order of beings they could have belonged?

Analogy would certainly favor the belief, that the present face of our globe is at some future time to be swept over by the hand of desolation; when, or through what destroying influence, the human mind can form no conjecture. Thousands of ages may first elapse, or physical causes, of which man can have no prescience, may be now at work in the Universe, preparing the way for a speedy consummation of this dread convulsion. To my mind there appears more evidence for believing that nature has advanced in her scale of animal life through successive destructions, and new and improved creations, than by the system of progressive development, or the gradual transformation of one species into another and of a higher character, put forth many years ago by Lamarck, and recently revived and somewhat modified in that beautifully written, though we are compelled to add, too fanciful work, the Vestiges of Creation. But then this whole subject of cosmogony, or world-making, is so obscure and difficult, so wanting in well established data, that I fear we can make little out of it unless we admit some aid from the imagination.

In conclusion of this somewhat desultory chapter, let us briefly inquire how the mind of man differs from that of the inferior, even the most sagacious of the inferior animal. The human is distinguished from the brute mind in the far higher degree of its intellectual capacities, its unmeasurable improvability, and in the possession of moral sentiments,—but faint evidences of which are exhibited by any of the lower orders of the animal creation. Man alone, too, has speech, a language, or the power of expressing his thoughts

and feelings by words or articulate sounds. Many of the inferior species have doubtless some power of communicating with each other through sounds, combined with actions and gestures, but such is widely different from a vocal language, though probably all that their rude faculties and simple feelings require. Several birds, moreover, may be taught to pronounce words and even to repeat sentences; but to associate thoughts with them is altogether above their power. They articulate mechanically, through imitation. Language implies a connected series, an association of ideas, a degree of intelligence which the brute mind cannot attain. It belongs only to the more exalted moral and intellectual capabilities of man, and these capabilities are dependent upon this power of speech for their full exercise and development.

Weeping and laughter, as expressive of certain mental conditions, as sorrow, and mirth, and satisfaction, would appear to be peculiar to our own species. Some animals beside man would seem to shed tears, but whether from grief is a matter of doubt; but none, I believe, not even the most manlike of the apes, ever evince a mirthful state of mind by laughter. Indeed their countenances are always marked even by a ludicrous expression of gravity.

The faculty of reflection, at least to any obvious extent, would appear to belong only to man. By reflection is meant the action of the mind upon itself; or the turning inward, or throwing back, the thoughts upon themselves, and thus creating new mental combinations, or new thoughts out of the ideas obtained through the medium of the senses. And from this compound operation of the mind do we derive an

additional and exhaustless spring of knowledge, with new motives to action, and a measureless increase in our relations with external things.

The relations of the brute animal to the objects among which he is placed have reference chiefly, if not solely, to the gratification of his appetites, or the satisfaction of his bodily wants, and his preservation from injury or destruction. His sensual desires pacified, and unthreatened by danger, he commonly falls asleep, or, at least, remains at rest. But such is not true of man, at least of civilized man. With his appetites satisfied, with ample provision for every physical necessity, and exempt from even the remotest apprehension of harm, still actuated by a class of wants above those of his mere animal nature, does he remain awake; observing the objects and phenomena around him; reflecting, perhaps, on his own mysterious nature, its complicated relations, its inscrutable destiny. Or, unsatisfied with the present, is stretching his view far into the dim and misty future, and judging, or trying to judge of its fast-coming events. Nor yet can his expanding mind be bounded by the world in which he dwells, but grasps at the universe and eternity, and space and time are too limited to contain it.

This curiosity, this insatiable appetite for knowledge, or the discovery of new truths, seems an attribute especially of our own nature, and is the stimulus ever urging us forward in the path of intellectual advancement. Scarce has the infant become familiar with the light of heaven; hardly does expression begin to brighten its vacant eye, ere it

evinces its incipient curiosity in touching, tasting, smelling, hearkening, and is thus treasuring up ideas of sensation, which are afterward to be compared, abstracted, combined, or, in other words, to be worked up into various new forms, constituting new and inexhaustible sources of mental progress.

It may be proper that I should here mention one other remarkable tendency in man's mind, and so far as we can have any evidence, in his alone, and therefore distinguishing him from all the rest of the animal kingdom;—it is to believe in some superior, invisible, and controlling existence. Various forms and attributes may be ascribed to this power in different conditions, and by different races of man; but I think it must be yielded, although some travellers have endeavored to prove the contrary, that no people or nation —I do not here speak of individuals—have ever been discovered entirely destitute of such belief. And associated with it is the fervent desire and confident expectation of passing after death to the blessed abode of this unseen power, and dwelling for ever amid joys, and among beings far more exalted than any which this earth can afford. How shall we explain such belief in the human mind? Is it innate, or was it implanted there by our Creator? Did it originate in an early revelation to our race, and which was communicated by tradition from age to age? Or was it begotten of man's longing after immortal life and undying bliss? Such questions cannot, of course, receive a categorical answer. At any rate it forms one of the strongest

arguments of natural religion—of which I am here only speaking—for man's immortality.

To man, then, in addition to his sensual wants which he holds in common with the brutes, belong those of a moral and intellectual, and I may also add of a religious character; and his external relations being correspondently multiplied, new feelings, new desires, new passions must be generated, which, while they open sources of enjoyment immeasurably exceeding any possessed by the lower animals, may beget a train of moral, and their consequent physical ills, burdening life with sorrow, and almost raising a doubt whether it should be viewed as a gift of mercy, or an imposition of wrath. Thus in the present disposition of things, do we ever find a system of compensation, an attempt, as it were, at a general equalization of enjoyment.

The inferior animal, if his appetites are appeased, and he is exempt from physical pain and the fear of danger, is apparently happy in the simple feeling of existence. But what torture of mind may not our own species endure, even when free from all bodily suffering, safe from every harm, and with resources, even in superfluity, for the gratification of every sensual want? An agony sometimes so terrible as to drive its miserable victim to the horrid alternative of self-destruction, a catastrophe rarely brought about by any amount of physical pain. Fortunately, however, by a judicious education of our intellectual and moral nature, much, very much may be done to avoid such mental sufferings, and the bodily diseases which so generally supervene.

CHAPTER II.

A JUDICIOUS EXERCISE OF THE INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES IS PROMOTIVE BOTH OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.—HUMAN NATURE MUST ADVANCE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECT.—EVILS RESULTING FROM MENTAL INACTIVITY.—INTELLECTUAL PURSUITS DO NOT NECESSARILY ABBREVIATE LIFE.—EXAMPLES OF LONGEVITY AMONG ANCIENT AND MODERN SCHOLARS.

That the noblest powers of our nature should have been designed for use and improvement, one might think would be universally admitted; nevertheless, there are not wanting those, eminent too for their learning, who have contended that the savage is our only natural and happy condition. Thus man—for such has been the picture drawn of him—in the golden age of his early creation, dwelling in a mild and balmy climate, abounding in vegetable productions suitable to his wants, lived solitary, naked, savage; roaming without care or thought the vast forests which he held in common with the brute, and feasting at will on the roots and fruits which the teeming soil spontaneously brought forth. Then was he pure, gentle, innocent; and exempt from all

those multiform and painful maladies which now afflict and shorten his career, his life glided on in a smooth and happy current, and when death at last overtook him, it came, not as at present, fraught with pains and terrors, but like the tranquil sleep that steals over the wearied senses of innocent childhood. Here, free from all those lights and shadows of the soul which spring from cultivated intellect, like the brutes, he was happy in the bare consciousness of existence, —in exercising his limbs—in basking in the sunshine, or cooling himself in the shade,—and in the gratification of his mere animal propensities.

> "Pride then was not, nor arts that pride to aid;
> Man walk'd with beast, joint tenant of the shade;
> The same his table, and the same his bed;
> No murder cloth'd him, and no murder fed.
> In the same temple, the resounding wood,
> All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God."

But that such a primeval state of blissful ignorance, health and purity ever existed, we have no other evidence than what rests on the fancies of poetry, or the dreams of poetic philosophy. The savages of the present day, who, one would suppose ought to come most nearly to this blessed state of nature, present a picture the very opposite of that described.

Some of the ancient philosophers were in the practice of decrying reason, and of asking whether any thing could be given by the gods to man more likely to make him unhappy. Rousseau has advocated with much speciousness and

sophistry this unthinking, savage, or what he calls the natural condition of our species. He contends that meditation is opposed to health, and therefore contrary to nature, and so he who gives himself up to a habit of reflection is a degenerated animal. On like grounds he lauds the custom of certain Indian tribes of flattening the heads of their newborn infants, as it saves them from the pernicious effects of genius.

It might, it appears to me, as reasonably be contended that the infant is the natural condition of the individual, as the savage and ignorant that of the species. The tendency of man is obviously to civilization and mental progress; whence the highest moral and intellectual advancement of which he is capable, is the only natural state that can be predicated of him. It is this mental progress that elevates one man, one race, one age above another. To this do we owe all the arts, refinements and comforts of modern life. It is this to which man naturally, I may say instinctively aspires. Intellect is indeed power, no bounds can be fixed to it. The laws of nature, the force of the elements, the swift lightning, are all turned and rendered subservient to its mighty purposes. Whatever man is to attain, must be through his intellectual advancement,—through this lies his destiny upon the present earth. Through the power of his intellect, if our species last, must he at length inherit the earth; all other animal forms must recede before his increase, and all available matter be worked up into his own superior organization. Such period is indeed far distant, if we measure time by our own little span of existence; but if

the earth and our species remain undestroyed, it will inevitably come. Human intellect may yet be but in its dawnings; it may have done little, scarce any thing, in comparison with what it is destined to accomplish. Let us not then, with some brain-sick poets and philosophers, presume to undervalue a power so vast, so boundless, so all-controlling,—a power through which our Creator has raised us above every other living creature, and by the advance of which alone we can ascend in the scale of creation. If ignorance is bliss, as is contended by some, then would it be bliss to be a brute.

Furthermore, is it not through a high and proper cultivation of the intellectual, that the moral nature is to be elevated and improved? I hold the belief, though I know the popular arguments that may be brought against it, that the most perfect state of intellect would necessarily imply the most perfect state of morals, inasmuch as it would enable us to calculate the moral with the same precision that we now do the physical laws; for the former, I believe, are just as settled, just as inflexible as the latter, and that any deviation, therefore, from moral rectitude—could we trace it in all its bearings, in all its remote connections—would be found as surely followed by suffering as any mechanical violence done to the body. But in the former case the suffering is generally indirect, removed from, and in consequence not readily traceable by our short-sighted intellect to its true source; while in the latter it is immediate, evident in its relation to its cause, and which is therefore guardedly shunned. No one, in his proper senses, will jump from the giddy precipice; no one, however he may be pained with

cold, will lay his hands on the burning embers, for the effect is direct, palpable, and obvious, therefore, to the most common understanding. And were our intelligence sufficiently exalted, it would, I doubt not, discover the same necessary connection between violations of the moral laws, and suffering or punishment; and then man would no sooner swerve from a moral law than he would throw himself from the headlong steep, or touch the living coal. We now rush into evil as the insect does into the blaze of the candle, from stupidity, or our purblind intellect failing to show us the inevitable consequences. A supreme intelligence could not go wrong.

The mind, like the body, demands exercise. That the proudest faculties of our nature were intended for slothful inaction,—that talents were given us to remain buried and unproductive, is repugnant alike to reason and analogy. There is, indeed, no power of the living economy, however humble, but needs action, both on its own account and on that of the general constitution. So closely united by sympathies are all our functions, that the judicious exercise of each one, beside conducing to its individual welfare, must contribute in a greater or less degree, a healthful influence to every other.

Man, as already affirmed, discovers a natural desire for knowledge; and the very exertion necessary to its attainment, and the delight experienced in the gratification of this innate curiosity, diffuse a wholesome excitement throughout the system. There is a pleasure in the exercise of thought, in whose kindly effects all the functions must in some measure participate. Every new acquisition of knowledge,

every new truth brings with it the highest, the purest enjoyment; and, different from our sensual and exciting pleasures, followed by no wasted health, no moral depression, no regret, no repentance. The man who feels that he is wiser at night than he was in the morning, feels himself advanced in the scale of creation, and therefore happier. Agreeable and well-regulated intellectual occupations are, I conceive, as essential to the soundness of the mind, as are judicious exercises to that of the body; and as the health of the latter, it must be admitted, conduces to that of the former, so, likewise, as it will be my uniform endeavor to establish in the succeeding pages of this volume, does a sound state of the mind impart a salutary influence to the functions of the body.

The mind, then, needs employment, not only for its own sake, but also for that of the organism with which it is so intricately involved. Mental inactivity, in the existing constitution of society, is the occasion of an amount of moral and physical suffering, which, to one who had never thought upon the subject, would appear almost incredible. From this proceeds that *tædium vitæ*—that dreadful irksomeness of life—so often witnessed among the opulent, or what are termed the privileged classes of society, who are engaged in no active or interesting pursuits, and who, already possessing the liberal gifts of fortune, and consequently the means of gratifying all their natural and artificial wants, lack the stimulus of necessity to awaken and sustain in wholesome action their mental energies. Hence, although they are objects of envy to those whose straitened circumstances call

for continued and active exertions, yet is their situation oftentimes any thing but enviable. Their cup of life, drugged with the gall and bitterness of ennui, their paramount wish is to escape from themselves—from the painful listlessness of a surfeited existence. The mind must be occupied, else gloomy and discontented, if not wicked feelings, will be likely to enter and abide there. To the enjoyment of retirement, internal resources, a "stock of ideas," such as comparatively few possess, are demanded.

Labor, of some sort, either of mind or body, is appointed to our race. Mother Eve and the Old Serpent are charged with entailing upon us this curse, as it is generally esteemed. But whatever it may have been originally, it has become absolutely necessary both to our moral and physical well-being. With our present constitutions, we should, I imagine, be miserable creatures indeed, with nothing to do but to sit under fig-trees in the garden of Eden. Paradoxical as it may seem, yet is it questionable if a much heavier curse could be imposed on man, with the nature he now possesses, than the entire gratification of all his wishes, leaving nothing for his hopes, desires, or struggles. The feeling that life is without aim or purpose—that it is destitute of any motive to action—is of all others the most depressing, the most insupportable to a moral and intellectual being. Man, at the end, is very apt to lament that existence has been a failure, because he has not reached some point—attained some eminent good—at which he could sit down content and happy, and to which all his hopes and labors had been directed. But we should know—and the

earlier we know this the better—that life is a chase, and a chase after something which we never overtake. And, is it not the chase, more than the possession of the game, that brings joy and animation to the huntsman? Let us, then, enjoy the chase, and be satisfied when it is finished, though the game has continued to elude our pursuit.

Men of different constitutions, habits, talents, and education, will, as it might be supposed, require different sorts and degrees of mental action. Such as are endowed with vigorous intellectual powers, and in whose exercise they have been long accustomed to indulge, are exposed to most suffering when their minds are left unemployed. Those, for example, who are fond of study, and have been long used to devote a part of their time to its prosecution, may even sustain a manifest injury, both in their moral and physical health, by a sudden and continued interruption of such habit; a painful void being thus left in the mind, indirectly depressing its feelings, and, by a necessary consequence, all the important functions of life.

It is told of Petrarch, when at Vaucluse, that his friend, the Bishop of Cavillon, fearing lest his too close devotion to study would wholly ruin his health, which was already much impaired, having procured of him the key of his library, immediately locked up his books and writing-desk, saying to him, "I interdict you from pen, ink, paper and books, for the space of ten days." Petrarch, though much pained in his feelings, nevertheless submitted to the mandate. The first day was passed by him in the most tedious manner; during the second, he suffered under a constant head-

ache; and, on the third, he became affected with fever. The bishop now taking pity on his condition, returned him his key, and thus restored him to his previous health.

Those, again, who, while yet in the vigor of life, retire from their wonted business, be it mercantile or professional, and thus all at once break up their habits of mental application, are apt to fall into a painful state of listlessness or ennui, and which, in certain temperaments, will often grow into a morbid melancholy, shading every scene and every prospect with a dismal and hopeless gloom. And sometimes the disgust and loathing of existence become so extreme, that they rid themselves of its hated burden with their own hands. This state of moral depression, if long continued, may also originate painful and fatal physical infirmities, or may pass into some settled form of insanity, especially that of monomania. In some instances it will change into, or alternate with, a reckless and ungovernable excitement; the individual running into wild extravagance, or rash speculations; giving himself up to habits of gambling, or gross intemperance, to relieve the painful void in his purposeless existence.

Elderly persons, who all at once give up their accustomed occupations, and consequently mental activity, and retire to enjoy their ease and leisure, will not uncommonly, especially if they had been previously free livers, experience a rapid breaking up of their mental, and perhaps bodily powers also, passing sometimes into a more or less complete state of what is termed senile dementia.

Under the circumstances of mental *inertia* to which I

have been referring, it is often observed that any thing arousing the mind to exertion, even positive misfortunes, will, by reviving the almost palsied feelings, be attended with a manifestly salutary influence. Thus is it that the retired opulent are oftentimes, if not past the age of action, made happier, healthier, and I may likewise add better, by the loss of so much of their property as to render renewed exertions necessary to their subsistence. Retirement from long-established and active duties demands intellectual and moral resources, to which few, in the present condition of society, can claim a title.

A mistaken, though generally received notion exists, that studious habits and intellectual exertions tend to injure the health, and prematurely exhaust the living energies; that they are prosecuted at the expense of the body, and must therefore hasten its decay. Such unfortunate consequences, however, are far from being necessary, unless the mental labors are urged to an unwarrantable excess, when, as in all overstrained exertions, whether of body or mind, various prejudicial effects may be rationally anticipated. I do not mean to assert that those in whom the intellect is chiefly engaged will enjoy the same athletic strength, or exhibit equal muscular development with others whose pursuits are of a more mechanical character,—for nature seldom lavishes upon us a full complement of her various gifts,—but I have no hesitation in believing that under prudent habits of life, and with a naturally sound constitution, they may preserve as uniform health, and live as long as any other class of persons. In support of such belief, abundant instances might

be cited, both from ancient and modern times, of men eminently distinguished for the amount and profundity of their mental labors, who, being temperate and regular in their habits, have continued to enjoy firm health, and have attained a protracted existence. Indeed, the observation has been made by some eminent writer, that "one of the rewards of philosophy is long life." Let me illustrate by a few examples. Among the moderns, Harvey lived to eighty-one, Jenner to seventy-five, Heberden to ninety-two, Boerhaave to seventy, Locke to seventy-three, Bacon to seventy-eight, Galileo to seventy-eight, Sir Edward Coke to eighty-four, Bentham to eighty-five, Newton to eighty-five, and Fontanelle to a hundred. Boyle, Leibnitz, Volney, Voltaire, Buffon, and a multitude of others of less note that could be named, lived to very advanced ages. And the remarkable longevity of many of the German scholars, who have devoted themselves almost exclusively to the pursuits of science and literature, is doubtless sufficiently familiar to my readers. Professor Blumenbach, the distinguished German naturalist, died not many years ago at the age of eighty-eight; and Doctor Olbers, the celebrated astronomer of Bremen, in his eighty-first year.

Baron Berzelius, the distinguished Swedish chemist, the magnitude of whose intellectual labors, and the number of whose scientific publications are almost incredible, died recently at Stockholm in his seventieth year.

Of the prominent intellectual men of our own country, many might also be mentioned who attained to very great ages. Chief Justice Marshall and Thomas Jefferson reached

their eighty-fourth year; Doctor Franklin and John Jay their eighty-fifth; James Madison his eighty-seventh; John Adams his ninety-first, and John Quincy Adams his eightieth. Now all these men, it is well known, were, during the greater portion of their lives, engaged in the most profound mental labors. Doctor Franklin continued his public services till he was eighty-two, and his intellectual exertions to near the close of his life. In a letter to one of his friends, written when he was eighty-two years old, speaking of his advanced age he says: "By living twelve years beyond David's period, I seem to have intruded myself into the company of posterity when I ought to have been abed and asleep. Yet, had I gone at seventy, it would have cut off twelve of the most active years of my life, employed too, in matters of the greatest importance."

The ancient sages, however, seem to have been privileged in respect to health and longevity, above those of modern days. Physical education was at their period held in much higher regard. More of their time was passed in the open air, and in active, muscular exercise, than is common with our own scholars. Their studies were often prosecuted without doors, and not a few of them taught their pupils, and accomplished even many of their astonishing intellectual labors whilst walking in the fields and groves. It was in this way that Aristotle imparted his instructions, whence, probably, came his disciples to be called peripatetics—the Greek verb περιπατεω, *peripateo*, meaning to walk about, or to walk abroad.

Socrates had no fixed place for his lectures, instructing

his pupils sometimes in the groves of Academus, sometimes on the banks of the Ilyssus, or wherever, indeed, he might chance to be with them. The eminent scholars of those days were likewise in the habit of travelling from country to country to disseminate their stores of knowledge.

I will close the present chapter by citing a few out of the numerous and best authenticated examples of longevity among the philosophers and learned men of antiquity. Homer, it is generally admitted, lived to be very old; so also did the philosopher Pythagoras, and the historian Plutarch. Thucydides, the celebrated Greek historian, and Solon, the famous lawgiver of Athens, reached the age of eighty. Plato died in his eighty-first year. Pittacus and Thales, two of the seven wise men of Greece, lived, the former to be eighty and the latter ninety-six. Xenophon, the Greek historian, and Galen, the distinguished physician, the latter of whom is said to have written no less than three hundred volumes, both attained their ninetieth year. Carneades, a celebrated philosopher of Cyrene in Africa, and founder of a sect called the third or new Academy, reached the same age. It is stated of Carneades that he was so intemperate in his thirst after knowledge, that he did not even give himself time to comb his head or pare his nails. Sophocles, the celebrated tragic poet of Athens, died in his ninety-fifth year; and then, according to one account, not in the course of nature, but by being choked with a grapestone. Other accounts have placed his death a little earlier, and referred it to a different accident, but all agree that he exceeded his ninetieth year. Zeno, the founder of the sect of the Stoics, lived

to be ninety-eight. Hippocrates expired in his ninety-ninth year, and, as we read, free from all disorders of mind or body. Xenophanes, an eminent Greek writer, and the founder of a sect of philosophers in Sicily called Eleatic, arrived to a hundred, and Democritus to the extreme age of a hundred and nine. I am aware that there is a little discrepancy in the statement of different historians in regard to some of the above ages, but there is no disagreement, I believe, in regard to the fact that all these individuals lived to be very old.

CHAPTER III.

EVIL CONSEQUENCES THAT MAY BE APPREHENDED FROM OVER-TASKING THE INTELLECTUAL POWERS.—RULES PROPER TO BE OBSERVED BY STUDIOUS MEN FOR THE SECURITY OF THEIR HEALTH.—THE ABILITY TO SUSTAIN INTELLECTUAL LABORS VARIES IN DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS, AND CONSEQUENTLY THE PROPORTION OF TIME THAT MAY BE SAFELY DEDICATED TO STUDY.

THE capabilities of the mind, in like manner with those of the body, must have their limits. The powers of the brain may be impaired by extravagant mental, as those of the muscles by severe corporeal exertions. And so close are the sympathetic ties uniting mind and body, that whatever tends to injure the former, must necessarily endanger the soundness of the latter. Hence, if the intellectual faculties are habitually overtasked, a train of moral and physical infirmities may be induced, imbittering existence and shortening its term.

Persons who addict themselves immoderately to intellectual labors become particularly exposed to affections of the brain, or organ overworked. They are liable to head

aches, and an undefinable host of nervous ailments. Inflammation, too, and a variety of organic diseases of the brain are not uncommon with them; and apoplexies and palsies are apt to assail them as they advance in life. Whenever there exists a predisposition in the physical constitution to apoplexy, close mental application, and, in a particular manner after the middle term of life, is most hazardous.

Epilepsy is another melancholy disease of the nervous system, which a highly active and exalted state of the mind would seem to favor. Many individuals distinguished for their talents and mental efforts, have been the subjects of this pitiable malady; as Julius Cæsar, Mahomet, and Napoleon; and of learned men, Petrarch, Columna, Francis Rhedi, Rousseau, and Lord Byron, are familiarly cited instances. Still, how much in these examples may be justly ascribed to the abstract labor of intellect, and how much to mental anxiety, or the undue excitement and depression of the moral feelings, cannot be easily determined.

Extreme mental dejection, hypochondriasis, and even insanity, particularly if there be in the constitution any tendency to such conditions, may sometimes result from the cause I am considering. And, in occasional instances, under their intemperate exertion, the energies of the brain have been consumed, the light of intellect has become extinct, and the wretched victim, in a state of mental imbecility, or even drivelling idiocy, has been doomed to linger out a miserable existence within the walls of a mad-house.

I have stated what may occur in extreme cases, from abuse of the intellectual powers. Still, I conceive that the

diseases of literary men are far oftener to be imputed to incidental circumstances connected with the neglect or abuse of their physical and animal nature, as their sedentary habits, injudicious diet, inconsiderate indulgence of their different appetites, &c., than to their mere mental labors. But, as being less blameworthy, and more flattering to their pride of understanding, students generally prefer to charge their bodily infirmities upon their toils of intellect. I feel well satisfied that, would studious men, or those whose avocations draw especially on the energies of the brain, but bestow the requisite attention on the regimen of life, they might, as before said, enjoy as good and uniform a share of health as most other classes of the community. But, unhappily for themselves, as they sooner or later discover, the importance of this they do not generally sufficiently understand, or properly regard. Thus we meet not a few in the community, who cultivate and adorn, in the most eminent degree, their intellectual and moral, while they are daily infringing the laws of their physical, nature. They neglect their needful exercise; they eat and drink as they ought not to eat and drink; they sleep irregularly, and abuse in a thousand other ways the welfare of their bodies. They think only of the mental—the spiritual; the gross vesture of flesh is beneath their consideration; and thus, heedless of all admonition, do they continue in their pernicious course, till their retribution comes in ruined health and premature decay. They are sinners—construe the term as we will—for they offend against the laws of their Maker, as evinced in their living organization, and thereby lessen the

sum of their usefulness, and shorten the career of their being. We are obviously possessed of a threefold nature—intellectual, moral and physical; and would we secure to ourselves the greatest amount of enjoyment, and raise ourselves to the highest attainable condition of humanity, we must regard, must educate and perfect it, in its threefold relations.

Among the rules of health most essential to be observed by those whose pursuits belong more especially to the mind, we may, in the first place, mention temperance, both in eating and drinking. Persons of studious and sedentary habits neither require, nor will they bear, the same amount and kind of food as those whose occupations call forth greater physical exertion, and produce, consequently, a more rapid consumption of the materials of the body. If such, therefore, will persist in eating and drinking like the day-laborer, they must look to experience indigestion, and all its aggravated train of miseries. Or, even should they escape such, the yet graver ills of excessive repletion, as inflammations and congestions, will be likely to overtake them.

A certain degree, at least, of regularity in respect to meals, is also important to be observed—the stomach, like every other organ of the animal economy, being subject to the influence of habit; and it is furthermore important, that while partaking them, the mind be abstracted as far as possible from all other concerns, and interested especially in the agreeable sensual impressions it is experiencing. The enjoyment of our food forms one of the best of sauces for the promotion of its digestion.

Eating, furthermore, being an imperious animal duty, sufficient time should always be appropriated to its performance. The habit of rapid eating is exceedingly common among studious men, and is very apt to be acquired at our colleges and boarding-schools—the inmates of which often dispatch their food more like ravenous animals than civilized human creatures. This most disgustingly vulgar practice of gorging our food but half masticated—of hurrying through our meals as though we were just going off in the stage-coach, I believe to have more concern in the production of indigestion among us than has generally been suspected. We read that Diogenes meeting a boy eating thus greedily, gave his tutor a box on the ear; and, also, that there were men at Rome who taught people to chew, as well as to walk. The instruction of some such teachers, both in reference to health and manners, might not be altogether out of place among ourselves.

There are a class of men who, under an affectation of moral and intellectual refinement, assume to regard eating as one of those base animal gratifications to which as little time and thought as possible should be appropriated. But let us remember that we yet dwell in the flesh, and cannot, therefore, become wholly spiritualized. Those actions which Nature has enjoined as necessary to our constitution, are fortunately—indeed the species, with its present laws, could not otherwise have been preserved—associated with enjoyment. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, not to despise, neither slavishly to pursue, the corporeal pleasures, but to accept of them with thankfulness, and to partake of

them with prudence. The gratification of all our appetites contributes, both directly and indirectly, to health and happiness; it is their abuse, only, that is reprehensible, and followed by pain and regret. Take from man his regularly returning social meal, and of how many sweet, domestic and friendly sympathies and associations, and consequently of how much human enjoyment, would you not deprive him? There belong to our nature sensual, moral and intellectual wants, and it is to their wise and duly apportioned gratification that we owe whatever happiness existence can afford. Spiritualize an individual, or raise him, through the purity and refinement of his intellect, much above the rest of his species, and he would be entirely unfitted for the sphere of his present being. Warmed by no human sympathies, enjoying no human companionship, he would be alone among his race. Even as it is, superior and refined intellect is apt to look upon the ordinary pursuits and enjoyments of the would as futile, frivolous, and to become secluded and misanthropic.

It is scarcely necessary, I trust, to insist on the importance to the health of intellectual men of daily exercise in the open air. Without this no one whose employments are of a sedentary character, can expect to maintain sound health. The amount of exercise required will depend something on the constitution, and much on the kind and quantity of the food. From two to four hours of the day should certainly be devoted to active bodily exertions.

Many students, tempted on by the inviting quietude, are in the habit of protracting their labors late into the hours of

the night, and at the manifest expense of their physical health. The wan and sallow countenance of the student is almost proverbially associated with the midnight lamp. Few causes tend more certainly to shatter the nervous energies, waste the constitution, and hasten on the infirmities of age, than deficient and irregular sleep. Thus, "to be a long and sound sleeper," we often find enumerated by the older writers among the signs of longevity. Those persons whose occupations, whatever may be their nature, interfere with their necessary and regular repose, are almost always observed to be pale, nervous, emaciated. Even a single night of watching will often drive the color from the cheek, the expression from the eye, and the vigor from the brain. Although so much of evil to mind, body, and estate, is ascribed to the prodigal indulgence in sleep, yet in our own busy and ambitious community we might reasonably doubt whether there is not, on the whole, more detriment from its deficiency than excess. And I am well satisfied that the human constitution would, in general, suffer less from extending than contracting the needful term of repose.

Constitutions will naturally differ in the amount of sleep they require, but most persons have to appropriate to it as much certainly as seven hours of the twenty-four. The slumbers of the forepart of the night affording, there is good reason to believe, most refreshment to the functions, it is advisable that students retire and rise seasonably, and accomplish, if circumstances will permit, their most arduous duties in the early portion of the day; for this is the time, if the body is in health, when the thoughts will generally be

most clear and accurate, and the labors, therefore, most profitable. The fittest working hours, indeed, both for mind and body, would seem to be those which intervene between breakfast and dinner, having reference to our own customary hours for these meals. It is the stillness and seclusion of the night which have mostly rendered it so favorite a period for study and contemplation.

Again, those devoted to intellectual application should frequently relax their minds by amusing recreation, by mingling in cheerful society, and joining in its rational diversions; otherwise they are liable to become gloomy, irritable, and misanthropic, states of feeling always at war with our physical well-being. The dignity even of the most erudite and talented, would hardly suffer from occasionally uniting in the innocent frivolities of society, while a gladdening influence would thus be imparted to the whole moral and physical constitution. Among the ancients it seems that the greatest souls did not disdain occasionally to unbend, and yield to the laws of their human condition. Thus the Catos, with all their severity of manners, found relaxation and enjoyment in the ordinary pleasures of life. And it is told of Epaminondas, that amid all his glory and moral greatness, he felt it no detraction to dance, and sing, and play with the boys of the city. And that Scipio Africanus amused himself in gathering shells, and playing at quoits on the sea-shore with his friend Lælius. And also that the sage Socrates became the pupil of the captivating Aspasia in dancing, as well as in eloquence, even when he was advanced in life. Montaigne, after extolling the

mighty intellect and lofty virtues of Socrates, his patience and forbearance under poverty, hunger, the untractableness of his children and the scratches of his wife, concludes by saying that "he never refused to play at cobnut, nor to ride the hobby-horse with the boys."* I do not mean to imply, however, that our own scholars and distinguished sages should dance with children, or take lessons in dancing of courtesans, or play at cobnut with boys, but only that they should relieve their mental labors by such amusements and recreations, such social enjoyments as, are consistent with their characters and agreeable to their feelings.

As a pure air not only serves to invigorate and sustain the body, but likewise to animate the mind, literary men should always choose for their studies, where so much of their time is passed, large and airy rooms. The narrow and confined apartments which many select for the prosecution of their mental labors, cannot be otherwise than prejudicial to health.

Different individuals, as we should naturally conclude, vary materially in their capability of supporting mental exertions. This may in some cases be referrible to habit, and in others to the native strength or feebleness of the constitution in general, or of the organ of thought in particular. To some persons mental application is always irksome; the task of thinking is the most unwelcome one that can be imposed on them. While in others, just the reverse is observed; the intellectual operations are ever accomplished

* Essays.

with ease and satisfaction, and to the new results of their studies and reflections do they owe the purest delights of existence. In the latter, then, the exercise of mind, being less arduous, and associated also with a pleasurable excitement, will be far better sustained than in the former. Mental occupations for which one has no taste, I scarce need say, are much sooner followed by fatigue and exhaustion, and are consequently more injurious, than such as accord with the inclinations.

I may here remark, though it must be sufficiently obvious to every one, that we can form no correct estimate of the absolute amount of mental labor in different individuals from what they accomplish. For as the giant in body may support his three hundred weight with as little effort as the dwarf his one, so also may the gigantic intellect produce its astonishing results with the same ease that the less gifted mind performs its comparatively insignificant tasks. Many a poetaster has doubtless worked as hard to bring forth a volume of doggerel verses, as Newton did in the production of his Principia.

In relation to the period of time that may be safely and profitably devoted to study, we can lay down no rules which will be universal in their application. Few persons, however, can spend advantageously, and without hazard to the physical health, more than seven, or, at furthest, eight hours of the twenty-four in close mental application. As the brain grows weary, its capabilities must diminish, and its productions in consequence be comparatively feeble, whence they are said to smell of the lamp. Having then regard

only to the intellectual results, nothing is really gained by overtasking the mind. It has been truly remarked that "there is scarcely any book which does not savor of painful composition in some part of it; because the author has written when he should have rested."

CHAPTER IV.

THE INTELLECTUAL OPERATIONS ARE NECESSARILY ASSOCIATED, TO A GREATER OR LESS EXTENT, WITH PASSION.—THOSE MENTAL AVOCATIONS WHICH ELICIT THE STRONGEST MORAL FEELINGS ARE MOST DETRIMENTAL TO HEALTH.

THE intellectual operations are seldom if ever altogether isolated from passion. Indeed, it is oftentimes through the activity of the passions that the powers of our understanding develope and perfect themselves. Even the mathematical studies, which would seem so purely to engage the reasoning powers, are not entirely exempt from all moral excitement or commotion. The mathematician may experience anger or regret if he encounters obstacles or difficulties in the solution of his problems, and joy and satisfaction under the opposite circumstances. But then with how many of our intellectual labors do not the most agitating feelings, as of hope and fear, envy, jealousy, anger, almost necessarily blend themselves! Need I instance the deep and terrible passions so frequently called forth in controversies of a religious and political character, and which have so often lighted the torch of the bigot, and deluged fields in blood? Where

is the eminent statesman, who, if he be not as phlegmatic as a clod of earth, does not at times, even in the midst of his highest mental exertions, feel himself writhing under the most painfully conflicting emotions?

It will scarce be disputed that the particular motives which are the incentives of our mental labors must serve to determine their influence upon the feelings. If knowledge be pursued for its own sake, or with a benevolent end, its acquisition will generally be associated with a quiet self-complacency, diffusing a healthful serenity throughout the whole moral constitution. But when, on the other hand, the stimulus to its pursuit is selfish ambition or personal aggrandizement, then may the most agitating and baneful passions of our nature be engendered.

We see, then, that it may be no easy matter to decide in each individual instance how much the intellectual operations are immediately concerned in the production of physical infirmities and premature decay, and how far they act indirectly through the emotions. It is not always to the midnight lamp alone, as is so commonly supposed, that the pale cheek and contracted brow of the scholar are due. The ambitious strife so active among literary men, and the anxious desire for success and popular favor, and all the consequent moral agitation and suffering, as of envy, jealousy, anxiety, deferred or defeated hopes, oftentimes do more, far more, to break down the constitution, than would even the most arduous mental efforts in their unblended operation.

The literary labors of Sir Walter Scott, although so persevering, do not seem, until aided by other causes, to have

been productive of any injury to his health, which is to be ascribed in a great measure to his peculiarly happy temperament. He appears through his whole career to have enjoyed a remarkable exemption from all those painfully agitating feelings which so wear upon the mind and body of the larger proportion of authors; to have displayed little of that keen sensibility so proverbially characteristic of the aspirants for literary fame. Hence his mental efforts must have been attended with less anxiety, and his moral tranquillity less hazarded by their event than among the more sensitive tribe of writers. It may furthermore be added that he was constant in his habits of exercise in the open air. But in the latter part of his life, when the brightness of his fortune had become overcast by the clouds of adversity; when his mental tasks were mingled with anxiety and broke in upon his needful rest, and his regular and salutary exercise, then did his physical health begin to yield, and fatal disease of the brain soon closed the last and most painfully tragic scene of his conspicuous and worthy career.

Those mental employments then, as it will now be inferred, which have the least tendency to call forth the painful and agitating emotions, will always be found most consonant to health. I may mention, in illustration, those tranquil and innocent studies which are embraced under the various departments of natural history, as botany, horticulture, zoology, &c., studies which rarely fail to bring content and serenity to the mind, to soften asperities of feeling, and to render healthier, happier, and better, those who have become devoted to them.

Studies that exercise especially the reasoning faculties, whose aim is truth, and which are attended with positive and satisfactory results, inasmuch as they afford the most calm and permanent gratification, and favor, therefore, that harmony between the moral and physical nature which has been deemed so important to health and longevity, are most safe and salutary in their influence on body and mind. Hence it is that those engaged in the exact sciences, as the mathematician, the astronomer, the chemist, usually enjoy better health, firmer nerves, more uniform moral tranquillity, and, other things equal, I believe a longer term of existence than those whose pursuits are more connected with the imagination, as the poet, or writer of fictitious narrative. In these latter the deep and varying passions are more frequently awakened; a morbid sensibility is encouraged, and the flame of life, exposed to such continual and unnatural excitement, must burn more unequally and waste more rapidly. Who does not rise with more self-satisfaction, with a more calm, equable and healthful condition of the mind, from studies which exercise and instruct the understanding, than from the morbidly exciting works of romantic fiction? Poetry and romance, then, ever as they wander from the standard of nature, must become the more prejudicial in their effects on the moral and physical constitution. To illustrate this remark I need but refer to the writings of Lord Byron and Sir Walter Scott.

Reason, the noblest gift of our nature, should always reign superior; should always hold in proper subjection the subordinate faculties. Whenever this rightful order in the

mental economy is subverted, whenever reason becomes enslaved to the fancy, and a sickly sentimentality of feeling usurps the place of the bold impressions of truth and reality, the vigor of the nerves decays, health languishes, and life is most commonly abbreviated.

"It is well known," says Dr. Pinel, "that certain professions conduce more than others to insanity, which are chiefly those in which the imagination is unceasingly or ardently engaged." He informs us that on consulting the registers of Bicetre, he found many priests and monks, as well as country people, who had been terrified into insanity by the anticipation of hell torments; also many artists, painters, sculptors, and musicians; some poets transported into madness by their own productions, and a great many advocates and attorneys. But no instances of persons whose professions require the habitual exercise of the judging faculty;—not one naturalist, nor a physician, nor a chemist, nor a geometrician.

Mr. Madden, an English writer, drew up tables to prove the influence of different studies on the longevity of authors and artists. At the head of these we find the natural philosophers with an average term of existence of seventy-five years. At the foot are the poets, who average but fifty-seven years, or eighteen less than those engaged in the natural sciences.* It must be admitted, however, that these data of Mr. Madden are exposed to so many sources of error that no great reliance can be placed upon the inferences drawn from them.

* Infirmities of Genius.

In conclusion of the present chapter, let me remark, what has been before implied, that all those mental avocations which are founded in benevolence, or whose end and aim are the good of mankind, being from their very nature associated with agreeable moral excitement, and but little mingled with the evil feelings of the heart, as envy, jealousy, hatred, must necessarily diffuse a kindly influence throughout the constistution.

CHAPTER V.

MENTAL LABORS ARE LESS FATIGUING AND INJURIOUS WHEN DIVERSIFIED THAN WHEN CONFINED TO SOME ONE PARTICULAR SUBJECT.—A TEMPERATE EXERCISE OF THE INTELLECT, UNITED WITH HABITUAL MUSCULAR ACTIVITY, IS MOST FAVORABLE TO THE GENERAL HEALTH OF THE SYSTEM AND TO LONGEVITY.—INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES VARIOUSLY AFFECTED BY DIFFERENT CONDITIONS OF THE BODILY ORGANS AND FUNCTIONS.

MENTAL labors judiciously varied will, in general, be far better sustained than those of a more uniform or concentrated character. As the same physical effort soon tires and exhausts the muscles concerned in it, so likewise will the same mental exertion produce a corresponding effect on the faculties it particularly engages. Hence the manifest relief we experience in changing our intellectual occupations—just, indeed, as we do in shifting our postures, or our exercises.

Close and undivided attention to any one object of real or fancied moment is apt to be followed, earlier or later, according to incidental circumstances, by pains and dizziness of the head, palpitations and irregularities of the heart's action, general lassitude and prostration of strength, dimin-

ished appetite, impaired digestion, emaciation, a contracted, sallow, care-worn countenance, and a whitening and falling out of the hairs. Or the mind, too ardently devoted to a particular theme, too long and intently engrossed by some solitary and absorbing subject, may at last, as Dr. Johnson has so well illustrated in the history of his astronomer, lose all power of seeing it aright, or in other words, become actually insane in relation to it. The common saying, therefore, that one may tell a lie till he believes it, is not without foundation in truth. Hence extravagant enthusiasm comes hard upon the confines of, and sometimes actually passes into insanity. And there is no community which is not more or less infested with wild bigots, zealots, those swayed by a single idea, and hardly to be distinguished from monomaniacs, who for their own sakes, and that of the community, ought to be subjected to the discipline of a madhouse.

The improvement in the countenance and general aspect of the body, and in the healthful vigor of all the functions, consequent to a relaxation from concentrated mental application, there are few but must have experienced in themselves, or remarked in others.

Change would seem almost essential to our health and happiness.

> "Look abroad through Nature's range,
> Nature's mighty law is change."

If subjected to like influences for long continued periods, they cloy and weary the senses, and we pine for novelty.

The same food will after a while pall upon the taste; the same scenery cease to delight the eye; the same society lose its early charms, and even the voice of love will fall dull and unmusical on the ear. Healthful and agreeable excitement in most of our organs is, to a certain extent, dependent on variations in their stimuli, and the brain forms no exception to this rule. It is sameness that begets ennui, or that painful weariness of existence so often witnessed among mankind, urging them sometimes even to self-destruction as a relief.

"Il est donc de la nature du plaisir et de la peine de se détruire d'eux-mêmes, de cesser d'être parce qu'ils ont été. L'art de prolonger la durée de nos jouissances consiste à en varier les causes. . . . . Voyez cet homme que l'ennui dévore aujourd'hui, à côté de celle près de qui les heures fuyaient jadis comme l'éclair; il serait heureux s'il ne l'avait point été, ou s'il pouvait oublier qu'il le fut autrefois."*

The older writers used particularly to recommend the varying of the habits and scenes of life, as of eating, drinking, exercising, thinking; "to be sometimes in the country, sometimes in the town; to go to sea, to hunt," etc. Some of the ancient medical sages even went so far as to advise, for the sake of change, an occasional slight excess. "To indulge a little, now and then, by eating and drinking more plentifully than usual." Most persons will find their account, both as respects health and happiness, in occasionally quitting old scenes and duties, and interrupting their estab-

* Bichat. Recherches Physiologiques sur la Vie et la Mort.

lished habits and associations, since by so doing they will return to them with refreshed powers, and renewed susceptibilities of enjoyment. The law of mutation is stamped upon, and seems necessary to the harmony and perfection of all the works of creation, and its operation may be equally needful to elicit and sustain the healthful action of our own bodily and mental powers.

Although I have not been disposed to regard even severe mental exertions, of themselves, so common a source of physical infirmity as is generally done, nevertheless I conceive a temperate exercise of the intellect, united with habitual muscular activity, to be most favorable to the general health of the system, to longevity, and, I may furthermore add, to the greatest sum of happiness to the individual.

Man, however, at the present period of the world, rising to power and honor, not as in the earlier ages through feats of strength, or bodily exploits, but by the superior influence of his mental endowments, it is not surprising that our physical should so often be sacrificed to our moral nature; that mind should be cultivated to the neglect, if not at the expense of the body.

Let me state in conclusion of the present chapter, that body and mind are so closely bound up together, that the slightest physical disease, particularly of the brain itself, may variously affect, or even destroy some or perhaps all the intellectual faculties. It requires but very little material change, but slight compression of this organ, to degrade the loftiest intellect below even that of the most stupid brute. The transcendent mind of Sir Walter Scott

was reduced to the most melancholy state of imbecility by a little softening in a limited portion of the brain. The powerful intellect of Dean Swift sunk under the pressure of water upon the brain. For five years prior to his death, he remained speechless and idiotic, "a driveller and a show." But I might cite any number of instances of the most lofty understandings brought to a like pitiable and humiliating condition by some, oftentimes slight, material change in the brain, and sometimes of other organs but indirectly connected with the functions of mind. What then is this our boasted intellect when it takes so little a matter to turn the philosopher into the fool? The memory suffers oftentimes most strangely under certain physical conditions of the brain. The power of remembering recent events is sometimes destroyed, while those long past come up with unusual vividness before the mind. And again the reverse of this is true, daily occurrences being retained while those of older date are lost to the remembrance. Sometimes the memory for words, or even for a particular class of words, as nouns, adjectives, verbs, is destroyed. There may remain a distinct idea of things and their relations, and also of persons, but their names cannot be recalled, nor understood when heard. Thus one thing may be called for another, and sometimes the individual thus affected invents a sort of language of his own, and always using his words in the same sense, it comes to be understood by those in constant attendance upon him.* In some instances not only

* Abercrombie on the Brain.

language, but all knowledge that had been acquired prior to the invasion of the physical malady is effaced from the memory, so that a new education becomes necessary.

In certain conditions, moreover, of the brain, as in dreams, the excitement of delirium, etc., ideas long forgotten, or sensations which produced no idea at the time they were received, may be revived, or brought out in the most distinct and vivid forms. Very many extraordinary and almost incredible cases of this nature might be adduced. Thus languages long forgotten have been spoken fluently under such states of cerebral excitement. Dr. Carpenter cites a remarkable instance "in which a woman, during the delirium of fever, continually repeated sentences in a language unknown to those around her, which proved to be Hebrew and Chaldaic; of these she stated herself, on her recovery, to be perfectly ignorant; but on tracing her former history, it was found that, in her early life, she had lived as servant with a clergyman, who had been accustomed to walk up and down the passage, repeating or reading aloud sentences in these languages, which she must have retained in her memory unconsciously to herself."*

Diseases of other organs beside the brain exercise a remarkable influence upon the powers of the understanding. Thus in disorders, especially of the stomach, liver, bowels, the memory and judgment often become very obviously impaired, and all mental processes are conducted with unusual labor and embarrassment. "He," said Dr. George

* Human Physiology.

Cheyne, more than a hundred years ago, "that would have a *clear* Head, must have a *clean* Stomach."*

Full feeding lessens the clearness and activity of the intellectual faculties. An intellectual process which we could carry out with ease before, we might find very difficult and embarrassing after dinner. Hence gluttonous men, those who live under the dominion of their stomachs, are very apt to be stupid in their intellects.

> "Fat paunches have lean pates ; and dainty bits
> Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits."†

That the particular nature of our food, as well as its quantity, may also exercise an important influence upon the strength and character of the understanding will, I think, hardly be disputed. But this subject is altogether too wide for the present volume.

* On Health and long Life. † Love's Labor Lost.

CHAPTER VI.

EVILS TO BE APPREHENDED FROM THE INORDINATE EXERCISE OF THE INTELLECT IN EARLY YEARS.

PREMATURE and forced exertions of the mental faculties must always be at the risk of the physical constitution. Parents, urged on by a mistaken ambition for their intellectual progress, are extremely apt to overtask the minds of their offspring, and thus may often not only defeat their own aims, but prepare the foundation of bodily infirmity, and early decay. Such a course is, moreover, repugnant to the plainest dictates of Nature, to be read in the instinctive propensities of the young, which urge so imperiously to physical action.

Exercise, in early existence especially, is a natural want, being then essential to train the muscles to their requisite functions, and to insure to the frame its full development and just proportions. So strong, indeed, is this tendency to motion, that few punishments are more grievous to childhood, than such as impose restraints upon it. The young, in truth, of all animals of the higher orders, equally display this necessary propensity. Liberate the calf or the

lamb from his confinement, and what a variety of muscular contractions will he not immediately exhibit in his active and happy gambols? He is herein but discovering the instincts of his nature, just as much as while cropping the grass and herbage. In tasking, therefore, the functions of the brain, and restraining, consequently, those of the muscles, in early life, we act in contravention to the most obvious laws of the animal constitution.

I do not mean that the powers of the mind are to be absolutely neglected at this period. They are certainly to be unfolded, but then prudently, and in just correspondence only with the development of the physical organization. To look for ripeness of intellect from the soft, delicate, and immature brain of childhood, is as unreasonable as it would be to expect our trees to yield us fruit while their roots were unconfirmed, and their trunks and branches succulent. "Nature," as was said by Rousseau, "intended that children should be children before they are men; and if we attempt to pervert this order, we shall produce early fruit, which will have neither maturity nor savor, and which soon spoils; we shall have young learned men, and old children. Infancy has an order of seeing, thinking, and feeling, which is proper to it. Nothing is more foolish than to wish to make children substitute ours for theirs; and I would as soon require a child to be five feet high, as to require judgment at ten years of age."*

In all the examples on record, I believe, in which chil-

* Cited by Tourtelle.

dren have reached maturity much earlier than in the common course of nature—as at six or eight years—old age and decay have been correspondently premature. In Dr. Millingen's Curiosities of Medical Experience, is cited "an account of a surprising boy, who was born at Willingham, near Cambridge, and upon whom the following epitaph was written :—'Stop, traveller, and wondering, know, here buried lie the remains of Thomas, son of Thomas and Margaret Hall, who, not one year old, had the signs of manhood; at three, was almost four feet high, endued with uncommon strength, a just proportion of parts, and a stupendous voice; before six, he died, as it were, at an advanced age.'" According to the surgeon who viewed him after death, the corpse presented every appearance of decrepit old age.

But, setting aside the hazard to the physical constitution, nothing is in reality gained, as respects the intellect, by such artificial forcing. On the contrary, the energies of the mind being thus prematurely exhausted, it seldom happens that these infant prodigies, which raise such proud hopes in the breasts of parents and friends, display even mental mediocrity in their riper years. In some cases insanity, or even idiocy, has been the melancholy result of such unnatural exertion of the organ of thought, while yet delicate and unconfirmed.

Furthermore, those even whose minds naturally, or independent of education, exhibit an unusual precociousness, rarely fulfil the expectations they awaken—either falling the victims of untimely decay,—

"So wise so young, do ne'er live long,"—

or else, reaching early the limit of their powers, they stop short in their bright career, and thus, in adult age, take a rank very inferior to those whose faculties were more tardy in unfolding, and whose early years were, consequently, less flattering. That mind will be likely to attain the greatest perfection, whose powers are disclosed gradually, and in due correspondence with the advancement of the other functions of the constitution. It is a familiar fact, that trees are exhausted by artificially forcing their fruit; and, likewise, that those vegetables which are slow in yielding their fruit, are generally stronger and more lasting than such as arrive earlier at maturity.

"We have frequently seen, in early age," observes a French writer on health, "prodigies of memory, and even of erudition, who were, at the age of fifteen or twenty, imbecile, and who have continued so through life. We have seen other children, whose early studies have so enfeebled them, that their miserable career has terminated with the most distressing diseases, at a period at which they should only have commenced their studies." *

* Tourtelle.

CHAPTER VII.

INTELLECTUAL OPERATIONS, CONCLUDED.—A FEW GENERAL SUGGESTIONS IN REGARD TO THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.—SEVERE INTELLECTUAL EXERTIONS ARE ALWAYS HAZARDOUS IN OLD AGE.

When we consider the injudicious management of childhood, physical, moral and intellectual, so common in the community, through the fond indulgence, ignorance, or wickedness of parents, and all the future ills to flesh and spirit that must result therefrom, we have almost reason, like the Thracians, to weep at the birth of a child.

In Sparta, while governed by the laws of Lycurgus, education was wholly under the control of the state; but its direction was not assumed until the age of seven. Up to this time, children remained with their parents, who placed little or no restraint upon their natural actions. Afterwards they were enrolled in companies, under the superintendence of governors appointed by the public, and were subjected to a strict and regular course of physical, moral and intellectual culture. Lycurgus then, who, as Plutarch says, "resolved the whole business of legislation

into the bringing up of youth," appears to have fixed upon the age of seven as the proper one to begin the systematic education.

During the first years of existence, the brain, probably from its physical condition, is inadequate to the task of reflection, or to the accomplishment of the higher intellectual functions. It would appear—if I may indulge for a moment in theory—that the vital forces are now especially required by the system at large to maintain its necessary development. If, therefore, they are too prodigally expended on the intellect, or unequally diverted to the brain, it must be at the cost of the other functions and organs. At any rate, under such circumstances, the growth is generally retarded, the muscular system but imperfectly developed, and the body continues spare and devoid of its fair proportions. The complexion will, moreover, be pale and sickly, the circulation and digestion feeble, and nervous affections, scrofula, or other infirmities of the flesh, are likely to supervene, overburdening existence, and shortening its term.

But little bodily restraint, therefore, certainly for the first five or six years of their life, should be imposed upon children. Long and irksome confinement to the sitting, or indeed to any one position, and especially in close rooms, cannot but be inimical to the just and healthful development of their physical constitution. On a general principle, too, it is better that they be allowed to choose their own muscular actions—to run, jump, frolic, and use their limbs according to their inclinations, or, in other words, as nature dictates, than be subjected to any artificial system of exercise.

Let it not be inferred, however, that the mind is to be neglected, or to receive no regard during the term mentioned; all contended for is, that its systematic education be not entered upon; that no tasks demanding confinement and fixed attention be imposed upon it. Light instructions, adapted to the capacities, and particularly such as can be associated with amusement and exercise, may be advantageously imparted, even on the earliest development of the mental faculties. And then the moral education, as I shall hereafter show, can scarce have too early a beginning.

Whenever a precocity of intellect is displayed, or a disposition to thinking and learning in advance of the years, and to the neglect of the usual and salutary habits of early life, it should be restrained rather than encouraged, since it is far more desirable that children grow up to be sound and healthy men, than as premature, sickly, and short-lived intellectual monsters.

In the first period of our being, the perceptive faculties, and the memory for words, are, more especially, to be called into action. That such is in accordance with the ordinations of nature, the earliest habits and propensities of children clearly reveal to us. While awake, they are constantly, and almost as it were without an effort, learning the sensible qualities of external bodies, and the symbolical sounds by which they are indicated, and thus daily collecting the raw materials of knowledge, to be wrought into various new and wonderful intellectual forms, as the brain and reflective faculties advance to maturity.

In the primary instructions then of children, such

knowledge only is to be imparted, for the acquisition of which they evince a natural aptitude. We observe them, for example, catching with interest, repeating, and remembering new words; delighted with, and soon imitating, harmonious sounds; pleased with pictures, and attempting rude copies of them. Hence, beside language, music and drawing might not improperly be introduced into the early systematic education. The analogy here between the infancy of society, and that of the individual, cannot fail to strike us. Barbarous people, like children, are particularly impressed by the sensible qualities of objects, and for the expression of which, and their own feelings, they have an imperfect language. They possess, likewise, a rude harmony, painting and sculpture; but no science, no philosophy; scarce any thing to intimate the progress of the reflective powers, or the maturity of the species.

From what has been remarked it will be readily seen that paintings and drawings, appealing as they do directly to the senses and memory, must be especially useful as a means of conveying elementary knowledge to childhood. In natural history, for example, a good deal of rudimental instruction may in this way be communicated even in very early life.

As the mind and body ripen, those studies are to be entered upon in which the reasoning faculties are in a special manner engaged; as the science of numbers, intellectual, moral, and the various other departments of philosophy. The period when the more purely intellectual education ought to be commenced cannot, of course, be precisely fixed,

for the reason that no two minds will be likely to mature in exact correspondence with each other. It is questionable, however, if the more strictly philosophical sciences can be generally prosecuted to much advantage before the sixteenth or seventeenth year.

Although the mind as it becomes more developed may be submitted to a stricter discipline than at first, yet at no period of the scholastic education is it to be rigorously tasked; but agreeable recreations and active exercises should frequently alternate with the labors of study, thus insuring a sound body as well as an enlightened mind. Plato had much to say on the exercises of the youth of his city, as their races, their games, their dances, &c., and seems to have regarded these as of most important consideration in the training of the young to the lettered sciences. That erudition and health are each most desirable is not to be disputed; nevertheless, to the mass of mankind—for comparatively few earn their bread by the efforts of their intellect—a good share of the latter will be likely to conduce far more to their success and happiness in life, than a large and disproportionate amount of the former.

In children of weakly constitutions, severe mental application is in a particular manner hazardous. In such the physical education is ever of paramount regard; the future health—for whose absence life has no recompense—being closely dependent on its judicious management. The practice, unhappily a very common one, of selecting the most delicate child for the scholar, is founded in error; some pursuit demanding physical action and exposure to the open

air is here especially necessary to impart new vigor to the infirm body.

In view of the physical health of the young, and the proper development of their frames, it is of the highest importance that the apartments appropriated for their instruction be both spacious and airy, and so planned, also, that any unnatural restraint on the posture of the body shall be avoided. Breathing the corrupted air of crowded school-rooms, and long confinement in them under constrained positions, is even at the present time, under all our improvements in their ventilation and construction, a not unusual source of bodily infirmity. Observation has convinced me that children suffer in their health even more than adults from a confined and impure air.

Finally, the instructions of youth should always, as far as practicable, be associated with pleasure. Children ought to be allured and encouraged, not forced and frightened to their mental tasks. Instead of

> "——— creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school,"

they should go to it cheerfully and merrily as to a place of enjoyment, and not under the terrifying apprehension of the rod. "A chaplet of *laurel*," as it has been said, "is worth a cart-load of *birch*." "How much more decent would it be," says Montaigne, "to see the forms on which the boys sit, strewed with flowers and green leaves, than with the bloody twigs of willows? I should choose to have the pictures of Joy and Gladness in the schools, together with Flora and

the Graces, as the philosopher Speusippus had in his, that where their profit is, there might be their pleasure. The viands that are wholesome for children ought to be sweetened with sugar, and those that are hurtful to them made as bitter as gall."

The conduct of education has of late certainly undergone a perceptible melioration; yet it needs no great stretch of memory to carry us back to the time when the following remarks of the author just cited on the schools of his own period would not have been altogether misapplied to our own. "They are really so many cages in which youth are shut up as prisoners. Do but go thither just as their exercises are over, you hear nothing but the cries of children under the smart of correction, and the bellowing noise of the masters raging with passion. How can such tender, timorous souls be tempted to love their lessons by those ruby-faced guides, with wrath in their aspects and the scourge in their hands?"* The system of corporal punishment in schools is, as it should be, much less common than formerly; but whether, contrary to the opinion of such wise men as Solomon and Doctor Johnson, the rod should be entirely spared, will admit of some reasonable doubt. There are some children so morally obdurate, that there seems to be no other effectual way to act upon them than through their physical sensibilities. Even here flogging should be very rarely resorted to, but when it is done it should be done thoroughly. Nothing can have a worse effect upon a child than frequent

* Essays.

small floggings. The birch then, although its use is properly becoming very much relaxed, will not be likely, for all the arguments in favor of moral suasion and moral influences of the humane, to be wholly dispensed with. It has too many associations, literary, classical and other, to be lightly given up, or easily forgotten. We tingle at the very thought of it. Shenstone has immortalized it in his School Mistress. Its very name (*Betula*, from the Latin *batuo* to beat) recalls to our thoughts the use to which it has been applied from time out of mind. "Its twigs," says Threlkeld, as cited by Dr. Drummond, "are used for besoms and rods; the one for the cleanly housewife to sweep down the cobwebs, and the other for the magisterial pedagogue to drive the colt out of the man."

In the last term of existence, all severe mental efforts become hazardous, in a special manner endangering apoplexies and palsies, to which this period is so peculiarly predisposed. In extreme age, indeed, almost every sort of exertion grows irksome and difficult; and the brain and other animal organs, fatigued as it were by the protracted exercise of life, incline to rest, the condition to which they are so fast approaching. Vitality, now feeble and nearly expended, the most prudent economy is demanded to preserve it to its utmost limits. Both mind and body, therefore, should be suffered to repose from all the cares, and anxieties, and labors of existence, that they may glide easily and gradually into their final sleep.

PART SECOND.

PASSIONS.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEFINITION OF THE PASSIONS, AND THEIR GENERAL DIVISIONS.

THE mind, equally with the body, is the subject of numerous feelings, pleasurable and painful, and which, according as they are mild or intense, receive the name of affections or passions.

The term passion comes from the Greek verb *πασχω*, *pascho*, and the Latin patior, each meaning to suffer, or to be acted upon, or affected either pleasantly or painfully. In its literal and primitive sense, then, it imports all mental feelings, without respect to their degree, although in common usage it denotes only their deeper shades; the word affection being employed to express those of a more gentle character. Still, a division of this sort must be in a great measure arbitrary, for as different degrees only of moral feeling are implied by affection and passion, it is clear that no definite point can be established at which the former will be just exalted into the latter, or the latter just reduced to the former. In truth, the literal signification of the term affection answers precisely to that of passion.

Some have attempted to make a distinction between passion and emotion, using the former as expressive of passiveness, or the simple feeling immediately resulting from the moral impulse; and the latter to indicate the visible effects, or the commotion manifested in the frame. But such a distinction, certainly in a physiological and pathological examination of the passions, will seldom be found practicable, since the feeling and physical phenomena are oftentimes so closely associated as to appear to be but the simultaneous effects of the primary exciting cause, and both, therefore, to belong essentially to the constitution of the passion in which they are displayed.

In the ensuing pages, then, the word passion will be employed as a general expression for moral feeling, and its concomitant physical effects, and it will therefore comprehend, and be used synonymously with both affections and emotions, its degree being denoted, when necessary, by the adjunction of an adjective. I may observe, however, that it is only the more exaggerated feelings, or what all agree in classing as passions, that put in hazard the physical health, in more particular relation to which we have to consider them.

As the design of the present volume calls for no detailed metaphysical disquisition on the passions, our classification of them will be very general and simple. We shall consider them under three principal heads, viz.: pleasurable, painful, and mixed, or those in which pain and pleasure are more or less obviously associated. Not that I regard this as an unobjectionable division. Like all others, it is in a

measure artificial, yet it seems to us to be the one which will best subserve the grand object of our treatise. The line especially between the two first and last classes, cannot in every instance be nicely defined; for the passions ranked as pleasurable are seldom wholly pure or unmingled with pain. Thus the happiest love is rarely clear from all pangs of jealousy, or the brightest hope from all sufferings of apprehension; and, as though it were preordained that no human enjoyment should be complete, even when at the summit of our wishes, and under the full gratification of our most ardent passions, fears and forebodings of change will almost always sully the purity of our happiness.

The same is in like manner true of the painful passions. Rare indeed is it that we find them wholly unmitigated by those which are pleasurable. Some faint beams of hope will generally penetrate even the deepest moral gloom. It is questionable, then, whether any of the passions, could they be perfectly analyzed, would be found absolutely free from all mixture of their opposite.

A large proportion of the painful passions experienced in society, are the offspring of such as are pleasurable. We suffer, because we have enjoyed. Our present state is darkened by contrasting it with the brighter past. Thus does our happiness frequently depend much less on what we are than on what we have been. The humble peasant in his lowly cot may enjoy as much felicity as the noble in his lordly palace; but reduce the latter to the condition of the former, and he becomes overwhelmed with misery. Diminish the wealth of the rich man to what he would once have

regarded as abundance, and wretchedness, sometimes even despair, may be the melancholy consequence. Often then might we be happy had we never been so, or could we bury in oblivion all remembrance of the past.

The reverse likewise holds true; the pleasurable passions deriving their existence from, or becoming greatly enhanced by, those which are painful. Few, probably, have reflected how large a share of human misery and human happiness derives its existence from contrasts. As we suffer because we have enjoyed, so also do we enjoy because we have suffered. Indeed, under our present constitution, the sufferings would seem almost as necessary to the enjoyments of life, as are the toils and fatigues of the day to the balmy slumbers of night.

Knowledge, too, or the enlargement of our ideas, in opening to us new fields of desire, and causing new comparisons with our present condition, becomes a frequent source of discontent, and the various painful passions of which it is the parent.

CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL REMARKS ON THE EVILS AND ADVANTAGES OF THE PASSIONS.—THE PHYSICIAN SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE MORAL AS WELL AS THE PHYSICAL CAUSES OF DISEASE.—INDIVIDUALS, FROM TEMPERAMENT, EDUCATION, AND VARIOUS INCIDENTAL CIRCUMSTANCES, DIFFER VERY STRIKINGLY IN THE FORCE AND CHARACTER OF THEIR PASSIONS.

THE agency of the passions in the production of disease, especially in the advanced stages of civilisation, when men's relations are intimate, and their interests clash, and their nervous susceptibilities are exalted, can scarce be adequately appreciated. It is doubtless to this more intense and multiplied action of the passions, in union sometimes with the abuse of the intellectual powers, that we are mainly to attribute the greater frequency of diseases of the heart and brain in the cultivated, than in the ruder states of society. Few, probably, even suspect the amount of bodily infirmity and disease among mankind resulting from moral causes—how often the frame wastes, and premature decay comes on, under the corroding influence of some painful passion.

It has seemed to me that the medical profession, in seeking for the remote occasions of disease, are too apt to

neglect those existing in the mind. Thus does it oftentimes happen that, while the physician is imputing the infirmities of his patient to all their most familiar causes, as bad diet, impure air, want of exercise, etc., it is in reality some unhappy and unrevealed passion which is preying on the springs of life. A knowledge of the secret troubles of the sick would, in many instances, shed new light on their treatment, or save them, at any rate, from becoming the subjects, if not the victims, of active medicinal agents. Plato has been cited as saying, "The office of the physician extends equally to the purification of mind and body; to neglect the one, is to expose the other to evident peril. It is not only the body that, by its sound constitution, strengthens the soul; but the well-regulated soul, by its authoritative power, maintains the body in perfect health."

In delicate and sensitive constitutions, the operation of the painful passions is ever attended with the utmost danger; and, should there exist a predisposition to any particular form of disease, as consumption, or insanity, for example, it will generally be called into action under their strong and continued influence, as I purpose to illustrate under the head of particular passions. It is probably true, as was said by Zimmerman, that, "In general, men of a powerful imagination suffer the most from violent sallies of the soul; and they who have more of reason than imagination, suffer most from the slower movements of the mind. Very indolent or stupid people, in general, suffer the least from the passions; but they who unite an enlightened reason to a lively and reflecting genius, are the most

agitated by them."* The same view was expressed by Dr. George Cheyne, and from whom Zimmerman copied it.†

The passions, however, although so greatly abused, and the occasion of so large a proportion of the ills we are doomed to suffer, yet when properly trained, and brought under due subjection to the reasoning powers, are the source of all that is great and good in man's nature, and contribute in a thousand ways, both directly and indirectly, to health and happiness. Intellect, without their quickening influence, even could it exist at all, would be but a dull and dreary waste. The soul would have no impulse to arouse it from its senseless apathy. They are the sunbeams which light and cheer our mental atmosphere. The greatest achievements are always accomplished by those of strong passions, but with a corresponding development of the superior faculties to regulate and control them. Sluggish feelings can never be parents to high and generous resolves. It belongs to us then to govern and direct to their proper ends, through the force of reason and the will, the passions which nature has implanted in our breasts. They cannot, nor is it desirable that they should be extirpated.

> "When Reason, like the skilful charioteer,
> Can break the fiery passions to the bit,
> And, spite of their licentious sallies, keep
> The radiant track of glory; passions, then,
> Are aids and ornaments. Triumphant Reason,
> Firm in her seat and swift in her career,

* On Experience in Physic.

† Essay on Health and Long Life.

Enjoys their violence; and, smiling, thanks
Their formidable flame for high renown."*

Mankind, owing to original differences of constitution or temperament, vary remarkably in the ardency of their feelings. Indeed, the external physical characters will oftentimes pretty clearly indicate the native vivacity and force of the passions. Thus, who would not at once distinguish, even by the complexion, the sanguine, or warm and excitable, from the phlegmatic, or cold and passionless? With acute moral, we almost, if not always have associated corresponding physical sensibilities. Hence, if slight causes affect the mind, so likewise will they the body; or, as it has been said, "he who suffers extremely from a slight wound, will suffer equally from a disagreeable idea."

Incidental circumstances operating upon the constitution, will likewise influence the activity and strength of the passions. Hence it is that the inhabitants of tropical countries are more apt to be hasty and violent in their feelings, to be agitated by more vivid emotions, and consequently to become enslaved to their sensual and animal nature, than those who dwell in colder climes. The unspiritual or carnal heaven of the Mahomedan is but a semblance of the sensual feelings inspired by his own voluptuous climate. Indolence and free living have also the effect to aggravate, and activity and temperance to weaken the operation of the passions; whence there are few better antidotes to their ungovernable violence than simple food and drink, and

* Young.

bodily labor. Fasting has from time immemorial been observed as a religious rite to mortify the flesh and spirit, and subdue inordinate passions. Fasting and prayer are especially urged in our own religion as a security against temptation, or our immoderate and wicked desires.

In some persons the animal or baser nature would appear constitutionally to predominate, the passions readily breaking from the control of reason and the will, and bringing sorrow, shame, and disease upon the unhappy individual. In others the contrary is true; the intellectual nature holding the supremacy, and ever keeping the feelings under a just restraint; and truly fortunate are they,

"Whose blood and judgment are so well co-mingled."

Some, again, appear naturally impressed by the good, and others by the evil passions. We meet individuals, rarely, it is true, yet we do meet such, in whom the amiable affections maintain a distinguished pre-eminence, even from the earliest development of their moral nature. They appear predestined to be good. Their placid and benevolent tempers would seem to be the result of a physical necessity, or of some happy but partial action of creative power. Such, however, are exceptions to the general laws of the species, and are consequently never perpetuated. But here the question will necessarily arise, Can we ascribe any virtue, any merit to such innate goodness, to such constitutional amiableness? Virtue is essentially active. It is engendered, through the force of the will, out of the contentions between the generous and noble, and the base and

despicable passions of the soul. Its very existence depends upon the successful struggle of our fortitude with the evil dispositions that are striving within us. It can only, therefore, be predicated of imperfect natures. Chastity would be no virtue in one without carnal desires, nor clemency in him who was incapable of hatred or anger. The poets glorify their gods by making them war with demons. As the artist heightens and sets off the bright and beautiful colors of his canvas by the dark shades with which he intermingles and contrasts them, and exaggerates the beauty of his angels through the ugliness of his devils, so does nature, on her moral canvas, enhance the lustre and comeliness of virtue by the very shadows and deformities which she throws into the picture. Hence, on the commonly received notions of the character of God,—as the idea has been elsewhere suggested,—although we may call him good, great, just, bountiful, yet we cannot call him virtuous; for his goodness demands no effort, no sacrifice; it belongs to his very essence; is as natural to him as it is to the flower to shed its odors, or the sun its luminous rays.

There is ever a contention going on in the human breast between the pure and wicked passions or dispositions, and herein consists all the machinery of demons, good and bad, in which the different systems of theology so abound. They are typical of the good and evil within us. Their wars for man's salvation or destruction are moral allegories. We resist the devil when we cultivate and cherish the higher, and successfully strive against our vicious sentiments and

inclinations. The evil demon has gained us, when the baser or animal triumph over the better and higher powers of our nature. Then has our good angel forsaken us, and we are left to our doom, to moral and physical ruin.

As it has already been remarked, the good passions greatly preponderate in some natures, so do the bad in others; and we meet those who scarce ever, even from their childhood, manifest an amiable or generous feeling. Such extreme cases, however, are happily rare. Generally, there exists in our composition, a due mixture of the good and evil dispositions. "Our virtues would be proud, if our faults whipped them not; and our crimes would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues."

Finally, there are those, who from early existence are marked by the predominance of some particular passion, as fear, anger, or ambition; that is, they are constitutionally timorous, irascible, or aspiring in their tempers. Education, however, may do much, very much, in repressing passions originally in excess, and developing such as are deficient; and herein consists moral culture, so vitally essential both to our health and happiness. Need I say, then, how much we must be the creatures of constitution and circumstance? how much of what we are we must owe to our native organization and predispositions, and those resistless influences which, in the necessary current of events, are brought to act upon us?

I am aware that views like the preceding will be objected to by some, as inconsistent with the freedom of our will, or as tending to the doctrine of necessity, of which many ap-

pear to entertain such needless dread. That we belong to some vast system, the grand purpose of which is hidden from human intelligence, will scarce be gainsaid; and that our every volition and action may be but infinitesimal and necessary links in the mighty and complicated chain of this great and unsearchable system, it is not irrational to believe. But as I pledged myself in the outset to shun all abstract speculations, I will leave this perplexed subject of fatalism with the remark only that there was true philosophy in that ancient mariner, who, being caught in a great storm at sea, exclaimed thus to Neptune:—"O God, if it is thy will, I shall be saved! and if it is thy will, I shall be destroyed! but I'll still steer my rudder true."

CHAPTER X.

THE PASSIONS BECOME GREATLY MULTIPLIED AND MODIFIED IN CIVILIZED LIFE.—THE EFFECT OF THE PASSIONS IS PARTICULARLY MANIFESTED IN THE VITAL FUNCTIONS, AS IN THE CIRCULATION, DIGESTION, SECRETIONS, ETC.—CERTAIN STATES OF THESE FUNCTIONS SERVE IN LIKE MANNER TO AWAKEN THE DIFFERENT PASSIONS.—MORAL INFIRMITIES OF MEN OF GENIUS OFTEN DUE TO THOSE OF A PHYSICAL CHARACTER.—ACTION AND REACTION BETWEEN MIND AND BODY.

THE passions have become so multiplied and modified through our social wants and relations, that it would be in vain to attempt a precise and satisfactory philosophical classification of them. The very same passion is often differently designated according to its intenseness, or as it is transient or enduring in its character; as fear and terror; hatred, anger, rage; sorrow, melancholy, despair. And then, again, many of the passions are so complex in their nature, or involve such a variety of feelings, that it becomes a matter of no little perplexity to decide on the particular denomination to which they rightfully belong. Could each one, however, be subjected to an accurate analysis, or traced up to its primal elements, they would probably all be redu-

cible to a few simple ones, grounded on our saving instincts, and consequently having a direct or indirect relation to the preservation of the individual, or the perpetuation of the species. Like our organic structure, they would be found to have their original types discoverable in the lower departments of life. Thus in the inferior animal we may see the passions operating in their most simple and necessary forms, as exemplified in fear and anger.

Some writers on the passions have regarded them all but as emanations from the principle of self-love.

> "Two principles in human nature reign,
> Self-love to urge, and reason to restrain;
> Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
> Reason's comparing balance rules the whole."*

Whether such, however, be their essential and primary source, is a question which, interesting as it may be in ethical science, is nevertheless unimportant to the design of the present essay. Our principal purpose being to show that the passions founded in pleasure are, as an ordinary principle, healthful, and those associated with pain, or in which pain preponderates, the reverse, the aforementioned summary division of them, viz., into pleasurable, painful, and those in which pleasure and pain are obviously commingled, is all that will be needful.

Let me here state the general proposition, which will be sufficiently illustrated in the sequel, that the condition of

* Pope's Essay on Man.

our moral feelings exercises a potent influence upon our physical organs, while that of our physical organs influences in an equal manner our moral feelings. In other words, that mind and body necessarily participate in the weal and woe of each other. Thus passion has been not unaptly defined, "any emotion of the soul which affects the body, and is affected by it." So remarkable is this interchange of influence between the mental feelings and bodily conditions, that by imitating the attitude and general expression of a particular passion, the sense of that passion will not unfrequently be straightway produced in the mind.

The effects of the passions are declared especially in those organs and functions which have been termed organic, or vegetative; as in the heart and general circulation; in the lungs, the stomach, the liver, the bowels, the kidneys, &c. Need I instance the disturbance in the circulation, respiration, digestion, which so immediately ensues under the strong operation of anger, fear, and grief?

So sudden and sensible is the influence of the different emotions upon the viscera of the chest and abdomen, as to have deceived Bichat, and several other eminent physiologists into the belief that in these organs is their primary seat. And to the same origin, in truth, would the figurative language of every people, civilized or barbarous, appear to refer them. Thus, while to indicate thought or intellect the hand of the orator is carried to the head; to express sentiment or passion it is directed, almost as it were instinctively, to the chest, or the pit of the stomach; and who would not be offended by the impropriety of the contrary?

That the passions should be referred to the situation where their physical consequences are particularly felt, is not to be wondered at; still it is not true that they are primarily and essentially in the viscera. They must originate in some condition of the mind, in some peculiar mode of perception, though instantly, many times even with the swiftness of thought, transmitting their influence to one or more of the organs mentioned.

It has been supposed that each emotion has some special organ or organs on which its power is more particularly expended. That some act most obviously on the heart, as fear and joy; others on the respiration, as surprise; and again others, as grief, on the digestive organs. "We shall find," says Dr. Bostock, "a clear indication of this connection in our common forms of speech, which must have been derived from observation and generally recognized, before they could have become incorporated with our language. The paleness of fear, the breathlessness of surprise, and the bowels of compassion, are phrases sanctioned by the custom of different ages and nations."* That certain of the secretions are influenced by particular passions is a well known fact. Thus the tears flow in grief and other strong emotions. Maternal love is well known to promote the flow of milk. Dr. Parry relates an instance of a lady who, long after she had ceased to nurse, would have a secretion of milk on hearing a child cry.† Even girls, old

* Elementary System of Physiology.

† Elements of Pathology.

women, and men, are said sometimes to have secreted milk under a strong desire to furnish it. The idea of savory food stimulates the flow of saliva.

The effects of a passion, however, as will hereafter be shown, are rarely limited to a single organ and function, but more or less of the viscera and their functions, though not usually in an equal degree, are embraced within their influence. But even admitting it to be true that each emotion bears a special relation to some individual organ or organs, our physiological knowledge of the passions is far from having reached that degree of perfection which would enable us in every instance to detect such relation.

It may be proper to remark here, that there exists a reciprocation of influence between the moral feelings and internal organs—that the particular condition of the former may either determine, or be determined by, that of the latter. Indigestion, for example, is well known to be sometimes the consequence, and sometimes the cause, of an irritable and unhappy temper. A sour disposition may be either the occasion or result of a sour stomach. Thus, in some instances, we sweeten the stomach by neutralizing the acerbity of the temper, while in others, we sweeten the temper by neutralizing the acidity of the stomach. Who of us but must have felt our digestion improve under the brightening of our moral feelings? And who of us but must have experienced the brightening of our moral feelings under the improvement of our digestion?

Admitting the above remarks to be true, the reason will be plain why children who, through the ignorance or weak

fondness of parents, are fed on indigestible diet, or indulged in improper gratifications of their appetite, other things being the same, require the rod so much oftener than others whose dietetic habits are regulated with more wisdom. An exclusive diet of bread and milk, united with judicious exercise in the open air, will oftentimes prove an effectual means of correcting the temper of peevish and refractory children.

When brought into close and frequent intercourse with particular individuals, we cannot but remark how sensitive, irritable, and disputatious they are apt to become, if unfavorable weather prevents for a few successive days their customary exercise abroad, and, more especially, if they have in the mean while been indulging in rich and indigestible food. The skin, at the same time, will look more dingy, and the eye less clear and bright than natural—circumstances, together, going to show that transient indigestion is the occasional cause of such unhappy state of temper. Under the conditions mentioned, a walk of an hour or two in the fresh air, will, by restoring the health of digestion, not rarely bring about the most agreeable change in the moral feelings.

The condition of the liver is also well known both to receive an influence from, and impart an influence to, the temper of the mind. Thus a sallow complexion, spare body, and the other signs of what is termed a bilious habit, are proverbially associated, either as cause or effect, with an unhappy disposition. I have known not a few individuals of unsteady tempers, in whom their amiable or unamiable fits were almost uniformly announced by the clearness or sallowness of their complexions.

Difficulties in other functions—as those of the uterine system—will likewise often cause a waywardness of temper, rendering the disposition morose and quarrelsome, or, it may be, gloomy and dejected. And the disturbance of the moral feelings, under the action of such physical causes, is sometimes to such extent as to constitute moral insanity, and more especially in those who have naturally weak resolutions, or but little strength of will, or have never been educated to a proper self-control. Shakspeare has said—

"'Tis in ourselves that we are thus and thus."

And this is true in a physical, equally as in a moral sense. External things take their hue very much from our different physical conditions.

"An hypochondriacal man," says Zimmerman, "whose nerves are weakened and relaxed, will consider, perhaps, the earth as a frightful desert. The moment he feels a transitory relief, the country around him seems to be covered with flowers; he thinks that the sun shines out, and that the birds make the woods resound with their melody."*

The intellectual faculties, as previously shown, do not escape the influence of these physical disorders. Thus, under morbid states of digestion, the memory becomes impaired, the thoughts wander, or are concentrated with difficulty on any particular topic, and all mental exertions become irksome, and unsatisfactory in their results.

* On Experience in Physic.

The well-known moral infirmities of many of the distinguished literary geniuses of modern times, may doubtless have been owing, in a proportion of the cases, at least, to those of a bodily character. "If health and a fair day smile upon me," says Montaigne, "I am a good-natured man; if a corn trouble my toe, I am sullen, out of humor, and not to be seen." That the capricious and unhappy temper of Pope was due, in a great measure, to the imperfection of his constitution, and consequent disorder of his bodily functions, especially of digestion, will scarce, I think, be questioned.

The poet Burns possessed all that moral sensibility, all the acute sensitiveness of feeling, so common in men of superior and erratic genius. He was unsteady and jealous in his temper, subject to great mental despondency, and, like many other men of poetical genius, weak in moral fortitude, or in the resisting or controlling power of his will. Now he is well known to have suffered severely from dyspepsia, and other bodily ailments, even before he became intemperate, and which may have had no small share in the production of his mental infirmities. "Burns had in his constitution the peculiarities and delicacies that belong to the temperament of genius. He was liable, from a very early period of life, to that interruption in the process of digestion, which arises from deep and anxious thought, and which is sometimes the effect, and sometimes the cause, of depression of spirits. Connected with this disorder of the stomach, there was a disposition to headache, affecting more especially the temples and eyeballs, and frequently accompanied by violent and irregular movements of the heart.

Endowed by nature with great sensibility of nerves, Burns was, in his corporeal as well as in his mental system, liable to inordinate impressions—to fever of body as well as of mind." All these morbid tendencies, and associate moral infirmities, were greatly aggravated by the indolent, irregular, and intemperate habits to which he surrendered himself, more especially in the latter part of his melancholy career. "In his moments of thought, he reflected with the deepest regret on his fatal progress—clearly foreseeing the goal towards which he was hastening, without the strength of mind necessary to stop, or even to slacken his course. His temper now became more irritable and gloomy; he fled from himself into society, often of the lowest kind. And, in such company, that part of the convivial scene in which wine increases sensibility and excites benevolence, was hurried over, to reach the succeeding part, over which uncontrolled passion generally presided."* Genius, high mental culture and refinement, generally go with an excitable temperament, with moral and physical susceptibilities, oftentimes even morbidly delicate, and out of which are engendered a host of bodily and mental ailments and infirmities; and all these frailties are encouraged and nourished by the peculiar habits and pursuits which genius affects. A certain degree of refinement of our sensibilities may be desirable, or, at any rate, other things being the same, must in a measure correspond with moral and intellectual culture; but, when in excess, is incompatible both with health and happiness, and

* Life of Burns. By Dr. Currie.

unfits us for all the necessary and ordinary duties of life. All our powers are wisely suited to our present sphere of existence, and "no sentient being, whose physical construction was more delicate, or whose mental powers were more elevated, than those of man, could possibly live and be happy here." He would enjoy no society, no interchange of thought, no human sympathies or aspirations, for man would bear to him the relation of an inferior animal. Do not now the nice perceptions, the refined and elevated sentiments, the delicate nervous susceptibilities of superior genius, sometimes approximate it to such unhappy condition? "Is there, then," asks Dr. Currie, "no remedy for this inordinate sensibility? Are there no means by which the happiness of one so constituted by nature may be consulted? Perhaps it will be found, that regular and constant occupation, irksome though it may at first be, is the true remedy. Occupation, in which the powers of the understanding are exercised, will diminish the force of external impressions, and keep the imagination under restraint."*

Lord Byron was remarkable for his morbid sensibility, and to which the weaknesses of his moral character, his capricious, wayward, and frequently gloomy temper, his excessive and unmanly feeling in regard to his lameness which so tormented him, are to be in a great measure ascribed. And all these infirmities were doubtless aggravated by his too free indulgence in strong liquors. The inspirations of his muse are said to have been generally aided by his favor-

* Life of Burns.

ite spirit *gin*. Byron exhibited all the infirmities, and experienced all the sufferings which are the so frequent companions of the poetic temperament. Byron attained early the maturity of his genius and the summit of his fame, for they were based upon the powers of his imagination, which may be highly developed at an early age. Poetic distinction has often been acquired even in boyhood, while in the pursuits of science or philosophy, which demand the exercise more especially of the higher or reflective faculties, true eminence is not often achieved before the fortieth or fiftieth year. The early ripeness of Byron's powers was followed by his correspondently early decline and death. Thus do we find him repining over the loss of his youth at the age of thirty-six.

"My days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone,
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.

"If thou regrett'st thy youth, why live?
The land of honorable death
Is here, up to the field and give
Away thy breath."

He died in his thirty-seventh year, an age at which the man of science has generally scarce entered the lists of fame.

Robespierre was in body meagre, sickly and bilious; and who can say—for the mightiest events will oftentimes spring from the most insignificant causes—how much of the horrid

cruelties of the French Revolution may not have been traceable to the vicious physical constitution of this blood-thirsty monster?

It is worthy of observation, that diseases of the organs of the abdomen are more apt to engender the gloomy and painful passions, than such as are confined to the viscera of the chest. Thus it may be stated as a general truth, that the dyspeptic will be more uniformly despondent and irritable than the consumptive subject.

It will now be obvious that a painful mental state having imparted an unhealthy influence to a bodily organ, a reaction must take place from this latter to the mind, adding new force to the moral suffering. And, on the other hand, when bodily disease excites the painful passions, they, in their turn, react upon and aggravate the morbid physical condition.

In like manner must the happy and healthful states of mind and body be constantly contributing to each other. Thus, sound and easy digestion imparts content and good humor to the moral feelings, which pleasurable mental condition reacting on the digestive organs, serves to maintain the health of their functions. It is a familiar saying that we should ask for favors after dinner. Thus Menenius, in alluding to the obstinacy of Coriolanus, says—

> "He was not taken well; he had not dined:
> Therefore I'll watch him
> Till he be dieted to my request,
> And then I'll set upon him."

A knowledge of this action and reaction of mind and body upon each other, should instruct the physician that all his duties to his patients are not comprised under their mere physical treatment, but that he is to soothe their sorrows, calm their fears, sustain their hopes, win their confidence; in short, pursue a vigilant system of moral management which, although so much neglected, will, in many cases, do even more good than any medicinal agents which the pharmacopœia can supply.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEREIN REAL AND IMAGINARY AFFLICTIONS DIFFER FROM EACH OTHER.—INCIDENTAL REMARKS NATURALLY SUGGESTED BY THE MUTUAL RELATIONS AND DEPENDENCIES OF OUR PHYSICAL AND MORAL CONSTITUTIONS.

KEEPING in mind the facts that have been stated in the preceding chapter, we come readily to the distinction between what are called real and imaginary sorrows; terms which, although so familiarly used, do not always carry with them a sufficiently definite meaning. The former, or real afflictions, are referrible to the agency of extraneous causes, operating primarily or immediately on the moral feelings; as loss of property, of relatives and friends, of reputation; and hence are strictly moral in their origin. The latter, or imaginary, are the offspring, for the most part at least, of unhealthy states of some portion of our organization, and their origin is consequently physical. Thus may we have accumulated about us all those blessings of existence which the world so earnestly covet, as friends, kindred, fortune, fame, and yet be even far more miserable than the penniless, houseless, friendless wretch, who is forced day by day to

wring his scanty subsistence from the frigid hand of charity. Some morbid condition of the stomach, of the liver, or of the nervous system may, and without causing any well defined or appreciable bodily suffering, so influence the mind as to paralyze all its susceptibilities, dry up all its springs of enjoyment, and overwhelm it with fearful apprehension; or, in the strong language of Dr. Brown, with "that fixed and deadly gloom, to which there is no sunshine in the summer sky, no verdure or blossom in the summer field, no kindness in affection, no purity in the very remembrance of innocence itself, no heaven but hell, no God but a demon of wrath."*

But these imaginary sorrows, as they are called, are real enough to those who experience them, and vain is it to argue that they exist but in the fancy. They have a positive physical cause, constantly operative, and are often infinitely more distressing than any absolute moral affliction, and more frequently lead to despair and suicide.

Our moral have a much closer dependence on our physical infirmities than mankind are generally prepared or willing to admit. It demands, in truth, an exaltation of will, of which few can boast, successfully to combat the morbid influences which the body often exercises on the mind. "He," says Dr. Reid, "whose disposition to goodness can resist the influence of dyspepsia, and whose career of philanthropy is not liable to be checked by an obstruction in the hepatic organs, may boast of a much deeper and firmer virtue than falls to the ordinary lot of human nature."†

* Philosophy of the Human Mind.

† Essays on Hypochondriasis.

The extent, then, to which human happiness, and, it may be added, human virtue, must depend on the integrity of the bodily organism and its functions, can scarce be computed. There are some whose original fabrication is so defective, whose living machinery or individual parts of it are so prone to work wrong, that it would seem almost physically impossible for them to be happy and amiable in their feelings and tempers. While, again, in others, so perfect is the whole organization, and consequently so healthy are all its functions, as to exempt them almost entirely from those multiform and terrible moral sufferings which come primarily from the body. Can we, therefore, escape the conclusion that we may be physically predisposed, I had almost said predestined to happiness or misery? Such, in fact, is implied in the familiar expressions of happy and unhappy constitution or temperament. As, moreover, these vicious constitutions are oftentimes inherited, and must, probably, in the first instance, have grown out of infringements of the organic laws, it becomes a literal truth, that the sins of the parents may be visited on their unoffending children, even to remote generations. "To be well born," then, is a matter of no little importance, "but," as has been wisely said by another, "not in the sense in which that expression is usually employed. The most substantial privileges of birth are not those which are confined to the descendants of noble ancestors.

"The heir of a sound constitution has no right to regret the absence of any other patrimony. A man who has derived from the immediate authors of his being, vigorous and

untainted stamina of mind as well as body, enters upon the world with a sufficient foundation and ample materials for happiness."*

The vast importance of a judicious physical education, both to virtue and happiness, cannot now but receive its just appreciation; for under its influence even a bad constitution, and the moral infirmities which are its almost necessary attendants, may be, in a very considerable measure, corrected. And we can likewise understand how essential is a prudent moral discipline to the good health of the body. In a perfect system of education, as it has been before remarked, the moral, intellectual, and physical natures are each subjects of most important, if not equal regard.

The deduction may, I think, also be drawn from what has gone before, that the practice of medicine must be varied and modified to suit it to different conditions of society. The simple, routine, mechanical practice which might serve well enough in hospitals, dispensaries, and among the rude, unlettered, or mere manual laborers, might be but ill-suited to the refined, cultivated, intellectual and educated classes. Among the latter, the intellectual and moral powers being more developed, and exercising consequently greater influence over the material organization and its functions, demand a more especial regard. Their nervous system also being more susceptible, and its sensibilities more delicate and acute, the means directed to the physical constitution have to be adjusted to suit such modified conditions. The

* Dr. Reid on Hypochondriacal and other Nervous Affections.

judicious and intelligent physician, thus learns to shape his practice, not only according to the different diseases, but also the different classes of patients he may be called on to treat. He who has practised medicine only in hospitals and dispensaries, will find he has much to learn when he comes to pursue it among the higher and more cultivated classes of society.

Having learnt how the disposition may be affected by bodily conditions, ought we not to exercise a mutual forbearance, and to cultivate feelings of charity for those infirmities of temper, which even the best of men will occasionally display, and which oftentimes belong more to the flesh than the spirit?

CHAPTER XII.

THE PASSIONS CONSIDERED MORE PARTICULARLY.—THE PLEASURABLE PASSIONS, WITH THEIR EFFECTS ON THE PHYSICAL FUNCTIONS, SUMMARILY NOTICED.

THE pleasurable passions include love, hope, friendship, pride, etc. Joy, which is ranked among them, would seem to be rather a general expression, or consequence, of all this class of emotions, than in itself a distinct and specific one; therefore are we said to enjoy love, hope, friendship, etc.; consequently the phenomena of the whole of them may be embraced under the general head of joy.

The passions founded on pleasure cause a universal expansion—if so it may be expressed—of vital action. The blood, under their animating influence, flows more liberally to the superficies, and playing freely through its capillary vessels, the countenance becomes expanded, its expression brightens, and the whole surface acquires the ruddy tint and genial warmth of health. The body also feels buoyant and lively, and there is a consequent disposition to quick and cheerful muscular motions: to run, to jump, to dance,

to laugh, to sing; in short, every function would seem to be gladdened by the happy moral condition. The common expressions, therefore, such as "the heart is light, or leaps with joy," "to swell with pride," "to be puffed up with vanity," "to be big with hope," are not altogether figurative; for the heart does bound more lightly, and the body appears literally to dilate under the pleasurable affections of the mind.

Nothing now contributes more effectually to the healthful and harmonious action of our organism than an equable distribution of the blood to its various parts, and especially the free circulation of this fluid in the extreme vessels of the surface. A full, bright, and ruddy skin is always ranked among the surest tokens of health. The nervous system must also experience a salutary excitement under the agreeable moral emotions. But I need not further dwell on what will be so apparent to all,—the wholesome influence of a happy state of mind upon our bodily functions. "Love, hope, and joy," says the celebrated Haller, "promote perspiration, quicken the pulse, promote the circulation, increase the appetite, and facilitate the cure of diseases."*

As, however, excess of feeling, whatever may be its character, is always prejudicial, even this class of passions, when violent, may be fraught with danger to health and life. Even felicity itself, if it exceed the bounds of moderation, will oppress, and sometimes even overwhelm us. When pleasurable feelings are extravagant, they become transformed into those which are painful. In other words, the

* Physiology.

extremity of pleasure is pain. Great joy is sometimes expressed like grief, by sobbing and tears. And what seems yet more strange, grief is sometimes expressed by immoderate laughter. "Dr. Crichton observes, 'that many (I am almost tempted to say most people) now and then have been inclined to laugh when a person has first begun to relate some misfortune. Nay, a more unaccountable circumstance of this kind is, that many people, when they have to tell of the death of another person, feel themselves often inclined to laugh at the moment they begin to speak of it;' and these individuals, he adds, are possessed of fine feelings. I knew two brothers who had experienced poignant grief from the death of a sister. The day after her interment they walked to her grave, a distance of two or three miles, to indulge their feelings, and on their return were seized with an irresistible propensity to immoderate and loud laughter, which continued for some time."* Laughter and weeping are oftentimes mingled in the expressions of both joy and sorrow, showing an unaccountable, a paradoxical relation between the effects of these two opposite passions in their more acute forms.

Extravagant and unexpected joy unduly excites the nervous system; increases unnaturally and unequally the circulation, and occasions a painful stricture of the heart and lungs, accompanied with sighing, sobbing, and panting, as in severe grief. Under its influence, too, the visage will often turn pale, the limbs tremble and refuse their support to the body, and in extreme cases, fainting, convulsions,

* Laycock on Hysteria.

hysterics, madness, temporary ecstasy, or catalepsy, and even instant death, may ensue. If the subject be of a delicate and sensitive constitution, and more especially if he labors under any complaint of the heart, the consequences of the shock to the nervous system of sudden and immoderate joy will always be attended with exceeding hazard.

I have mentioned insanity as one of the morbid effects of joy. Esquirol, however, a French writer on this disease, of high authority, asserts that the cheerful emotions are rarely its cause; that joy, so excessive even as to destroy life, does not take away the reason; and that on a careful investigation of certain cases of insanity ascribed to joy, he became assured that the cause was mistaken. English writers, however, generally rank extravagant joy among the causes of mental alienation. Dr. Mead affirms, "that immoderate joy, too long continued, as effectually disorders the mind as anxiety and grief," and says:—"I have formerly heard Dr. *Hale*, physician to *Bethleem-hospital*, and of great experience in these matters, say more than once, that in the year MDCCXX, ever memorable for the iniquitous South Sea scheme, he had more patients committed to his care, whose heads were turned by the immense riches which fortune had suddenly thrown in their way, than of those who had been completely ruined by that abominable bubble."* It has been observed that adventurers in lotteries have suffered more serious consequences, as loss of reason, and other physical ills, from the prizes than from the

* Medical Precepts and Cautions, by Richard Mead, M. D., &c. London, 1751. pp. 88–9.

blanks that they have drawn.—"An engineer proposed to the committee of public safety in the second year of the republic, a project for a new invented cannon, of which the effects would be tremendous. A day was fixed for the experiment at Meudon; and Robespierre wrote to the inventor so flattering a letter, that upon perusing it, he was transfixed motionless to the spot. He was shortly afterwards sent to the Bicetre in a state of complete idiotism."*

The assertion has been made by some, it was made by Zimmerman, that sudden joy is even more hazardous to life than sudden grief, and that there are more numerous instances of fatal effects from the former than the latter passion.

Diagoras, a distinguished athlete of Rhodes, and whose merit was celebrated in a beautiful ode by Pindar, inscribed in golden letters on a temple of Minerva, died suddenly from excess of joy on seeing his three sons return crowned as conquerors from the Olympic Games.

Dionysius, the second tyrant of that name, is recorded to have died of joy on learning the award of a poetical prize to his own tragedy. And Valerius Maximus has ascribed the death of Sophocles to a like cause.

Chilo, a Spartan philosopher, called one of the seven wise men of Greece, on seeing his son obtain a victory at Olympia, fell overjoyed into his arms, and immediately expired.

It is related that Pope Leo the Tenth, under the influ-

* Treatise on Insanity. By Ph. Pinel, Prof. of the School of Medicine at Paris, etc.

ence of extravagant joy at the triumph of his party against the French, and for the much coveted acquisition of Parma and Placentia, suddenly fell sick and died. "M. Juventius Thalna, on being told that a triumph had been decreed to him for having subdued Corsica, fell down dead before the altar at which he was offering up his thanksgiving. Vaterus relates, that a brave soldier, who had never been sick, died suddenly in the arms of an only daughter, whom he had long wished to see. A worthy family in Holland being reduced to indigence, the elder brother passed over to the East Indies, acquired considerable riches there, and returning home, presented his sister with the richest jewels: the young woman, at this unexpected change of fortune, became motionless and died. The famous Fouquet died on being told that Louis XIV. had restored him to his liberty. The niece of the celebrated Leibnitz, not suspecting that a philosopher would hoard up treasure, died suddenly, on opening a box under her uncle's bed, which contained sixty thousand ducats."*

Dr. Good tells us of a clergyman, an intimate friend of his own, who, at a time when his income was very limited, received the unexpected tidings that a property had been bequeathed to him amounting to three thousand pounds a year. "He arrived in London," says Dr. Good, "in great agitation, and entering his own door, dropt down in a fit of apoplexy, from which he never entirely recovered."† Haller made the remark, that "excessive and sudden joy

* Zimmerman on Experience in Physic.

† Study of Medicine.

often kills, by increasing the motion of the blood, and exciting a true apoplexy."*

If the extreme of joy follow unexpectedly an emotion of an opposite character, the danger will be heightened. A story is recorded of two Roman matrons, who, on seeing their sons, whom they had believed to be dead, return from the famous battle fought between Hannibal and the Romans near the lake of Thrasymenus, and in which the Roman army was cut to pieces, passing suddenly from the deepest grief to the most vehement joy, instantly expired.

Examples have likewise happened where culprits, just at the point of execution, have immediately perished on the unexpected announcement of a pardon. We may hence draw the important practical lesson, that the cure of one strong passion is seldom to be attempted by the sudden excitement of another, of an opposite character. Violent emotions are, as a general rule, to be extinguished cautiously and gradually. Rapid and extreme alternations of feeling, and indeed all sudden extremes, are repugnant to the laws, and, consequently, dangerous to the well-being of the animal economy. To endeavor, at once, to eradicate deep grief by excessive joy, is, as I have seen it remarked, as irrational as it would be to expect the restoration of a frozen limb from pouring upon it hot water.

Instances are not wanting where the inflation of pride, or immoderate self-esteem, which must be ranked among the pleasurable feelings, has actually deranged the understand-

* Physiology.

ing. Menecrates, a physician of Syracuse, as we read in classical literature, was particularly famed for his exalted self-conceit, and which at length so disturbed his intellect that he fancied himself to be the ruler of heaven, and, in a letter written to Philip, king of Macedon, styled himself Menecrates Jupiter. The Macedonian monarch, as the story goes, having invited this physician to one of his feasts, had prepared for him a separate table, on which he was served only with perfumes and frankincense, like the master of the gods. At first this treatment greatly delighted him; but soon growing hungry under such celestial fare, and the temptation of the substantial viands on which the rest were feasting, he began to feel that he was a mortal, and stole away in his proper senses. But then we have no occasion to go back to the ancients for instances of disordered intellect from overweening self-esteem. Thousands in the community have their judgment blinded, and their reasoning powers impaired, through an extravagant and mistaken estimate of themselves. Esquirol places pride among the most frequent moral causes of insanity. And inordinate self-conceit is also a very common attendant on insanity. The insane almost always entertain an unduly exalted opinion of their own powers and consequence. Humility seldom marks their disease.

It will be readily seen, now, how undue praise or flattery may endanger the soundness of a weak and conceited mind; and not always are strong intellects proof against it; even the most vigorous brain may sometimes be turned through the siren influence of adulation.

Another reason why pride, when immoderate, favors mental aberration, is its exceeding liability to become mixed with the painful passions. The proud suffer far more poignantly than the lowly-minded from contumely and humiliating reverses of fortune, which, in this uncertain world, can seldom be altogether escaped. But here pride acts not as a pleasurable feeling, but by arousing and giving force to the painful emotions, the effects of which will engage our future consideration.

The great importance, even in reference to bodily health, of an habitual cultivation of the pure, and generous, and amiable affections of our nature, will now be readily inferred, since they are all fraught with gentle pleasure, and all, therefore, the sources of agreeable and salutary excitement. The mild and benevolent affections necessarily carry with them their own reward, both to body and mind. Under their kindly influence, the heart plays more freely and tranquilly, the respiration is more placid and regular, the food acquires new relish, and its digestion fresh vigor; in short, they animate and perfect every living function, and expand and multiply all the various enjoyments of our being. Without them, the heart would have no summer glow; a cold selfishness would freeze up all its springs of joy, and the earth would become a dismal solitude, not worth inheriting. Sad, desolate, and weary is his lot, who lives but for himself —who has nothing to love! "If we had been destined to live abandoned to ourselves on Mount Caucasus, or in the deserts of Africa, perhaps Nature would have denied us a feeling heart; but, if she had given us one, rather than love

nothing, that heart would have tamed tigers, and animated rocks."

The exercise of gentleness and good-will in our various social and domestic relations, not only contributes to our own moral and physical well-being, but also to the happiness, and consequently health, of those about us and dependent upon us. Courtesy, like mercy, carries with it a double blessing,—

"It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

The ungentle and churlish in heart and manners, however just they may be in principle, chill the feelings, and poison the happiness of all within the circle of their influence.

Cheerfulness, contentment, hope!—need I say how propitious are their effects on the various functions of the animal economy? Hope has well been termed a cordial, for what medicament have we so mild, so grateful, and at the same time so reviving in its effects? Many live almost entirely on its cordial influence. And deprived of its animating incitement few would care to live. "Its characteristic is to produce a salutary medium between every excess and defect of operation in every function. Consequently it has a tendency to calm the troubled action of the vessels, to check and soothe the violent and irregular impetus of the nervous system, and to administer a beneficial stimulus to the oppressed and debilitated powers of nature."* The able

* Cogan on the Passions.

physician well understands the advantage of encouraging this salutary feeling in the breasts of his patients. Hippocrates uttered the opinion, verified by all succeeding physicians, that, other things equal, the practitioner who has the fullest confidence of his patients, will be most successful. Hence it is, that like medicines from a physician of fame, will oftentimes prove more successful than from others of less celebrity. On the same principle may oftentimes be explained the frequent improvement observed in a patient on a change of his physician; and also the benefit not rarely derived from newly-discovered and much-talked-of remedies. It is to the faith and hopes awakened in the credulous minds of the sick by his dogmatical promises, that the empiric owes his chief success in disease. That the patient then should possess faith in medicine, and confidence in his physician, is of no little moment as respects his recovery. "It is of little consequence," it has been remarked, "whether a man be healed through the medium of his fancy or his stomach."

I have previously shown that sudden transports of joy may be attended with serious, and even fatal consequences; is it unreasonable therefore to suppose, that the pleasurable feelings may, in some rare instances, continue to exist with too great ardor, consuming with an unnatural rapidity the mysterious forces of life? I have occasionally met with individuals, and I dare say my readers will call some such to mind, who appeared to live almost continually in an unnatural state of felicity; whose every thought and feeling seemed pregnant with an enthusiasm of delight; who were

predisposed, physically predisposed to be happy, intensely happy; and these seemingly favored beings have generally come to an early grave: it appearing as though nature had ordained that none of us should exceed a limited sum of enjoyment, and that in proportion, therefore, as she heightens its intenseness, does she curtail its duration.

The human constitution was manifestly never designed for acute excitements, whether of a pleasurable or painful character; hence its energies soon waste under their too constant operation. Even our good desires, then, may be too impetuous, and our virtuous zeal outrun the limits of healthful moderation. It is an apt saying that "the archer who shoots beyond the mark, misses it as much as he that comes short of it." There is no privilege more to be desired, there is nothing more conducive to health, longevity, and true enjoyment, than a just equanimity of mind, a quiet harmony among the various passions; wherefore it is that most philosophers have made our sovereign good to consist in the tranquillity of soul and body, leaving ecstatic pleasures and rapturous feelings to beings of a different nature from our own.

"A constant serenity," says Dr. Mackenzie, "supported by hope, or cheerfulness arising from a good conscience, is the most healthful of all the affections of the mind." And the same author, in enumerating the natural marks of longevity, mentions a calm, contented, and cheerful disposition.* Haller also, in speaking of longevity, says: "Some

* The History of Health and the Art of preserving it.

prerogative seems to belong to sobriety, at least in a moderate degree, temperate diet, peaceable disposition, a mind not endowed with great vivacity, but cheerful, and little subject to care."

As old age comes on, the pleasurable susceptibilities all become weakened, and the keenness of passion in general is blunted. Not, however, that the aged, as some would seem to fancy, are left destitute of enjoyment, for each period of our being has its characteristic pleasures. They have parted, to be sure, with the eager sensibilities which mark the freshness of existence, but then they have gained a moral tranquillity with which earlier years are seldom blessed. The storms of youthful passion have subsided within their breasts, and if life has passed well with them morally and physically, they now repose placidly amid the calm of its decline.

CHAPTER XIII.

GENERAL PHENOMENA OF THE PAINFUL PASSIONS AS MANIFESTED IN THE BODILY FUNCTIONS.

THE second class of passions, now to be examined, are distinguished by phenomena very different from those which have just been described. As the emotions based on pleasure determine the blood to the surface, equalize the general circulation and vital action, expand the body, lighten and cheer the heart, and animate all the functions; those founded on pain induce a series of results precisely opposite in their character. Under the active influence of these latter, the whole body appears, as it were, to shrink or contract. The blood abandons the surface, and so being thrown in undue quantity upon the internal organs, there follows that inward oppression, that painful sense of stricture and suffocation, and the consequent desire for fresh air, which always mark the intensity of this class of passions. Hence the frequent sighing under severe grief, which act consists in a deep inspiration, succeeded by a corresponding expiration, and thus by expanding freely the chest, and affording a larger supply

of air, it alleviates, in some measure, the heart and lungs of their suffocative load. There are few, however, so privileged beyond the ordinary lot of humanity, but must be well acquainted with that painful sense of tightness and weight at the chest, that panting and struggling of the breath, and laboring of the heart, the certain accompaniments of aggravated sorrow.

As an equable distribution of the blood to the various organs, and its free circulation through the capillary vessels of the surface are, as stated under the pleasurable emotions, salutary to the physical economy; an inequality, on the other hand, in the dispensation of this vital fluid, or partial determinations of it, must always prove detrimental to its welfare. Whenever the blood is disproportionably accumulated upon the internal viscera—which has been shown to happen from the operation of the painful and depressing passions—their functions quickly become disturbed, and even the integrity of their organization endangered.

The painful passions also act immediately on the nervous system, depressing, disordering, expending, and sometimes even annihilating its energies. A morbid concentration of the nervous influence upon the internal organs, has likewise been supposed to take place under the operation of the painful passions, and to which have been referred those distressing internal sensations which they so generally occasion.

The painful and depressing emotions exercise a striking influence on the various secretions—increasing, diminishing, and depraving them. Thus dryness of the mouth, from suppression of the salivary secretion, almost always attends

severe and unpleasant affections of the mind. This is proved "by the well-known test, often resorted to in India, for the discovery of a thief amongst the servants of a family—that of compelling all the parties to hold a certain quantity of rice in the mouth during a few minutes—the offender being generally distinguished by the comparative dryness of his mouthful."* But there are few of us, it is to be presumed, who have not experienced that uncomfortable dryness of the mouth and throat, huskiness of the voice, frequent and difficult swallowing, which proceed from moral embarrassment, agitation, and suffering. Even poisonous properties are said to have been imparted to the saliva by violent mental commotions. The secretion of milk is in a particular manner affected by the disturbing and depressing passions, as anxiety, grief, fear, anger, fretfulness, &c. Under their influence it may be diminished, or be entirely suppressed, or become so vitiated as to cause disease, and even death, in the infant. We shall have occasion to recur to this subject—the effect of the moral feelings on the secretions—under the particular passions.

I have stated that the general effect of the painful passions is to induce a contraction or concentration, and a depression of the actions of life, but in their more aggravated forms, they are sometimes followed by a transient excitement, reaction or vital expansion, when their operation becoming more diffused, is necessarily weakened in relation to any individual organ. Under such circumstances, the

* Carpenter's Human Physiology.

oppression of the heart and lungs is in a measure removed, and the circulation and respiration go on with more freedom. Hence it is, that when anger and grief explode, or break forth into violent action and vociferation, and tears flow abundantly, their consequences are much less to be dreaded than when they are deep, still, and speechless, for then it is that their force is most concentrated. Thus Malcolm says to Macduff, overwhelmed by the cruel tidings of the murder of his wife and children :—

> " What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows ;
> Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak,
> Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break."

Let me here repeat the general and important truth, that the pleasurable passions tend to expand or enlarge the sphere of vital action, and to equalize its distribution, and are therefore salutary in their physical effects, whilst those of a painful nature concentrate or contract, and disturb its just equilibrium, and are consequently deleterious. To be convinced of this, we need but contrast the countenance of the happy and confident with that of the sad and despondent. In the former it is bright and dilated, and the blood plays freely in its extreme vessels. In the latter, it is pale, sickly, contracted, and expressive of inward pain.

As, therefore, when we use the familiar expressions,—to be light or buoyant with joy,—to expand with pleasure,—to be inflated with pride,—to be puffed up with vanity, we but express physiological truths ; so do we likewise when we say

the heart is oppressed or breaking with grief; or that the body shrinks with fear, or withers under sorrow and despair.

It is, moreover, worthy of remark, that the same spare or contracted state of the body, and sallowness of the complexion, which result from the operation of the painful and depressing passions, are, when constitutional or dependent on incidental causes acting primarily on the physical system, very commonly associated with an unhappy and unamiable disposition. Thus Cæsar, while he put trust in the rosy and expanded face and full-fed sides of Marc Antony, looked with suspicion on the pale and contracted countenance, and meagre frame of Cassius.

> "Would he were fatter!—But I fear him not:
> Yet if my name were liable to fear,
> I do not know the man I should avoid
> So soon as that spare Cassius."

Here, then, we have a further illustration of the statement previously made, that the like bodily condition may be either the cause or the effect of particular passions; that an interchange of influence is constantly and necessarily taking place between our moral and physical natures.

I will now go on to exhibit somewhat more in detail, the effects of the painful emotions on our bodily functions, under the general heads of anger, fear, grief, envy, jealousy, and shame. I select the three former of these, especially, as being by far the most comprehensive in their character.

In truth they must enter, one or more, into all the numerous varieties of this division of passions; accordingly, the descriptions of their phenomena will necessarily comprise the principal ones of the whole class. Perhaps, indeed, all the painful passions, could they be subjected to an accurate analysis, might be found but modifications of, and consequently be reducible to, anger, grief, or fear.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANGER.—VARIOUS PHENOMENA DISTINGUISHING THE ACUTE STATE OF THIS PASSION.

ANGER being founded especially on the instinct of self-preservation, is essential to the constitution of all animate beings. It is aroused by, and at the same time urges us by an instinctive impulse to repel or destroy, all such causes as oppose or threaten our moral or physical ease and security; or, in other words, which bring unhappiness to the mind, or pain, injury, or destruction to the body. Hence it is often directed against the irrational, and even inanimate objects of creation. Modified and abused, therefore, as we find it, it was originally implanted in our breasts as a necessary safeguard alike to our happiness and existence. This passion, although more frequently of a purely selfish nature, may originate in our sympathies with the wrongs and injuries of others, or in the feeling of repugnance toward injustice, or wickedness in general, when, it assuming a more beneficent and dignified character, we often express it by the term indignation.

In an extreme paroxysm of anger, which I will here

describe, the most painful phenomena are exhibited. The countenance becomes distorted and repulsive, and the eye sparkles with a brutal fury. All the vital actions are commonly, in the first instance, oppressed, and are many times nearly overwhelmed. The blood recedes from the surface, leaving it cold and blanched; and tremors and agitations often come over the limbs, or even the whole body, and sighing, sobbing, and distressing nervous affections, as hysterics, spasms, convulsions, especially where there is a predisposition to such, are of not unfrequent occurrence. The vital fluid, and may-be the nervous influence also, being impelled from the exterior, and thus accumulated on the internal organs, the functions of these become sensibly embarrassed. The motion of the heart is feeble, labored, irregular, and oftentimes painful. The breathing is short, rapid, difficult or suffocative, and a tightness or stricture is felt in the whole chest, in some cases extending to the throat, and causing a sense of choking, impeding, or for a time wholly interrupting the power of speech. Hence, probably, comes the expression, "to be choked with rage."

The organs of the abdomen also come in for their share of the prejudicial influence. Thus distress is apt to be experienced in the situation of the stomach, and the functions of this organ, with those of the liver and bowels, may undergo various disturbances.

Fainting sometimes takes place in violent anger; and in occasional instances, the system being unable to react under the intensity of the shock, life has surrendered itself almost as to a stroke of lightning; and the death here, or from

such sudden gust of passion, is, according to Mr. Hunter, as absolute as that caused by the electric fluid, the muscles remaining flaccid, the blood liquid, or dissolved in its vessels, and the body passing rapidly into putrefaction. Reaction, however, does for the most part speedily ensue, and many times, even in severe paroxysms, the excitement is manifested from the very beginning. Under the active stage of anger the following train of phenomena will be displayed in greater or less strength.

The heart now aroused, beats quick and forcibly, and the blood rushing impetuously to the head and surface, the brain becomes heated, the face flushed, the lips swollen, the eyes red and fiery, the skin hot, and literally may it be said that we burn with anger. The muscles also contract with a preternatural strength; the fists and teeth often become clinched as in preparation for combat, and the impulses of instinct subduing perhaps altogether the will and reasoning powers, the brutalized slave of passion vociferates, stamps, threatens, is violently agitated, and perceiving and judging in a manner wholly different from what he would in a tranquil state of mind, his character becomes allied to that of the maniac, and thus may he commit acts the bare thoughts or mention of which would strike him with horror under a more rational or unpassionated state of feelings. To this forcible reaction of anger the term rage, or fury, is often applied.

Different individuals, owing to their native temperament, bodily health, and moral education, vary remarkably in their propensity to anger, as well as in the pertinacity

with which they cherish it. In some it is sudden and transient, while in others, though perhaps less hasty, it assumes a more deep and lasting character, settling into that malignant feeling called revenge, the most terrible, and oftentimes the most obdurate one that degrades the human soul, so that the poets, the true painters of our passions, have fabled it as immortal. The disposition to anger will, as a general rule, be found greater, and the passion more precipitate and ungovernable in hot than in cold climates.

In many of the inferior animals, when enraged, the various physical phenomena of the emotion under notice, may be seen in all their formidableness. In those of our own species, too, in whom, either from physical organization, or defective moral and intellectual culture, the animal or baser nature is ascendant, we oftentimes behold exhibitions of it equally fearful.

Anger accompanied with paleness of the surface, or in which reaction does not take place, is generally most deep, and its consequences most formidable. Some persons always become pale when under its influence, which may now and then be owing to the mingling with it of a certain measure of fear, which passion has a more depressing operation.

Anger sometimes proves fatal, the severity of its shock at once suppressing the action of the heart, or, as occasionally has happened, causing an actual rupture of this organ, or some of its large blood-vessels; for the heart, although a strong muscle, is sometimes broken, literally broken by passion. Apoplexy, hemorrhages, convulsions, or other grave

affections, may likewise proceed from anger, quickly terminating existence.

Although the danger from this passion is generally lessened by reaction, still, when such is violent, the blood may be so forcibly impelled as to induce fatal apoplexies, or hemorrhages.

The emperor Nerva died of a violent excess of anger against a senator who had offended him. Valentinian, the first Roman emperor of that name, while reproaching with great passion the deputies from the Quadi, a people of Germany, burst a blood-vessel, and suddenly fell lifeless to the ground. "I have seen," says a French medical writer, "two women perish, the one in convulsions, at the end of six hours, and the other suffocated in two days, from giving themselves up to transports of fury."*

If there chance to exist any tendency to apoplexy, as in those of a plethoric habit, and who live generously, or should there be any complaint at the heart, the danger from anger will be much increased. Hence it is that old men, who are more particularly disposed to affections of this sort, offer the most frequent examples of sudden death from passion.

Numerous examples of apoplexy occasioned by anger, are recorded both in ancient and modern works on this disease. Bonetus tells of a lady who, in consequence of a sudden fit of anger, was seized with violent and fatal apoplexy, and in whose brain blood was found largely diffused. "A gentleman somewhat more than seventy years of age, of a

* Tourtelle.

full habit of body, and florid countenance, on getting into his carriage to go to his country house, was thrown into a violent passion by some circumstances which suddenly occurred. He soon afterwards complained of pain in his head, and by degrees he became sleepy, and in about a quarter of an hour wholly insensible. He was carried into the shop of an apothecary at Kentish Town, and was immediately largely bled. When I saw him, about an hour afterwards, I found him laboring under all the symptoms of strong apoplexy. In about twenty-four hours he died."*

The distinguished John Hunter fell a sudden victim to a paroxysm of anger. Mr. Hunter, as is familiar to medical readers, was a man of extraordinary genius, but the subject of violent passions, and which, from defect of early moral culture, he had not learned to control. Suffering, during his latter years, under a complaint of the heart, his existence was in constant jeopardy from his ungovernable temper; and he had been heard to remark, that "his life was in the hands of any rascal who chose to annoy and tease him." Engaged one day in an unpleasant altercation with his colleagues, and being peremptorily contradicted, he at once ceased speaking, hurried into an adjoining room, and instantly fell dead. Mr. Hunter ascribed the commencement of his heart-disease to a fit of passion.

The heart receiving immediately the shock of every fit of anger, the life of the passionate man who labors under an affection of this organ, must be held in constant uncertainty.

* Treatise on Nervous Diseases. By John Cooke, M. D., etc.

Nothing does more to protract existence under complaints of this nature than moral serenity.

Various morbid effects of a more or less grave and lasting character are also liable to follow immoderate anger. Thus palsies, epilepsy, hysteria, and mania may be placed among its occasional consequences. Anger, or violent or ungovernable temper, as it is sometimes expressed, holds, according to the reports of different lunatic asylums, both of Europe and America, a prominent place among the causes of insanity. Raving madness is said to be the form of mental derangement which most often results from this cause, though dementia has sometimes been the consequence of its sudden operation. Dr. Good cites the case of Charles the Sixth of France, "who being violently incensed against the duke of Bretagne, and burning with a spirit of malice and revenge, could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, for many days together, and at length became furiously mad as he was riding on horseback, drawing his sword, and striking promiscuously every one who approached him. The disease fixed upon his intellect, and accompanied him to his death."*

Anger destroys the appetite, and checks or disorders the function of digestion. Let one receive a provocation in the midst of his dinner, and he at once loses all relish for the food before him. Dr. Beaumont, who had under his charge a man with a fistulous opening into his stomach, so large that the interior of this organ could easily be inspected, re-

* Study of Medicine.

marked that anger, or other severe mental emotions, would sometimes cause its mucous, or lining coat, to become morbidly red, dry, and irritable; occasioning, at the same time, a temporary fit of indigestion. Pains and cramps of the stomach and bowels sometimes follow the severe influence of this passion, and the liver may also become implicated in its morbid effects. Thus the flow of bile has been so augmented under its sudden action, as even to occasion a bilious vomiting, or diarrhœa. An old writer relates a case of fatal ileus, from volvulus, caused by a paroxysm of anger. And Dr. Whytt observes of this same passion, that in women it frequently occasions spasmodic contractions in the bowels, and flatulent or hysteric colic.

This, like other emotions when forcible, variously affects the different secretions. Under its influence the saliva becomes diminished, and consequently inspissated, whence its frothy whiteness, and adhesiveness, and the frequent swallowing under its action. Dr. Whytt speaks of it as having been followed by an uncommon excretion of saliva; and we have the statement on various and respectable medical authority that the secretions of the mouth may become poisonous through rage. Dr. Good remarks, "that most animals, when roused by a high degree of rage, inflict a wound of a much more irritable kind than when in a state of tranquillity: and we have numerous examples in which such wound has been very difficult of cure, and not a few in which it has proved fatal; as though at all times, under such a state of excitement, some peculiar acrimony was secreted with the saliva."*

* Study of Medicine.

It has even been affirmed that true hydrophobia may be generated by the bite of an animal when transported by fury; in proof of which many examples are cited from the older medical writers; and some, where even the bite of a man worked up into fury has produced symptoms of this disease. How far we may accredit these marvellous relations is matter of some doubt, though it would seem hardly reasonable to impugn the truth of all of them, resting as they do on the testimony of such numerous authorities. That some, or even many, were cases of tetanus mistaken for hydrophobia, is altogether probable. Broussais asserts that anger imparts to the saliva "poisonous qualities, capable of provoking convulsions, and even madness, in those persons bitten by a man agitated with it."

The secretion of milk is often very remarkably affected by fits of anger, being rendered so irritating as to cause griping and morbid discharges in the infant. An irritable and fretful temper has been found to diminish its quantity, to render it thin and serous, and so to deprave its quality as variously to disorder the bowels of the child.

Various hemorrhages, as from the nose, lungs, stomach, and inflammations of different parts, as of the skin, the brain, the stomach, the lungs, have occasionally followed severe fits of passion. The author last cited states, that he has seen hæmoptysis, or spitting of blood, and violent pneumonia, or inflammation of the lungs, proceed solely from anger. He relates the case of an elderly man, who, owing to a violent fit of anger, occasioned by a visit from some foreign soldiers, was suddenly affected with an extensive inflamma-

tion of the right loin, which terminated in a large and bad ulcer.

Dr. Laycock, in his Essay on Hysteria, reports a case of a young woman, of indolent habits and obstinate temper, becoming affected with hysteria, ecstasy, and sweating of blood, from being angered. Having been much irritated in consequence of some remarks of her parents, she left home in consequence, and after wandering about for some time, she entered a hospital, suffering under violent attacks of hysteria and general convulsions. "After paroxysms which sometimes lasted twenty-four or thirty-six hours, she fell into a kind of ecstasy—her eyes being fixed, and sensibility and motion suspended. Sometimes she muttered a prayer, and blood would exude in drops from the cheeks and epigastrium, in the form of perspiration." Dr. Whytt observes, that anger has been immediately followed by bleeding at the nipples, and a rupture of such vessels as were lately cicatrized.*

I have now and then met with instances of erysipelatous inflammation about the face and neck, induced by paroxysms of passion. Other cutaneous affections, as urticaria, or nettle-rash, lepra, or leprosy, and herpetic eruptions, will oftentimes, especially where any predisposition to them exists, be produced by the same cause. I have known nettle-rash, in some constitutions, to be almost uniformly brought on by any strong mental emotion. And of leprosy, Cazenave remarks, that "one of the most common causes is to be traced

* Observations on Nervous Disorders.

to the mental affections; hence it is not rare to see *Lepra vulgaris* supervene on a fit of anger, or violent grief or fear."* Dr. Pettigrew cites a singular effect of anger, in a boy. Whenever he "fell into a passion, one-half of his face would become quite pale, while the other was very red and heated, and these two colors were exactly limited by a line running down the middle of the forehead, nose, lips, and chin. When this boy had heated himself by any violent exercise, the whole face became equally red."†

As substances most prejudicial, and even poisonous, to the healthy organism, may exercise medicinal virtues in certain states of disease, so extreme anger, although generally baneful in its effects, has, by its powerful impulse, occasionally subdued distressing and obstinate maladies, as neuralgia, gout, agues, paralysis, and various nervous affections. Dr. Abercrombie mentions a case of palsy of six years' continuance, where recovery suddenly took place under a violent paroxysm of anger.

* On Cutaneous Diseases.

† Superstitions connected with Medicine and Surgery.

CHAPTER XV.

ANGER, CONCLUDED.—PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF ITS CHRONIC ACTION.—IT MAY BE EXCITED BY MORBID STATES OF THE BODILY ORGANS, AND THUS BE STRICTLY PHYSICAL IN ITS ORIGIN.

HAVING learnt in the preceding chapter how severe and dangerous are the effects of acute anger on the vital economy, it will create no surprise that, under its more chronic action, as in habitual irritability or fretfulness of temper, enmity, hatred, revenge, or other malevolent feelings, as envy or jealousy, in which anger, to a greater or less degree, is almost necessarily blended, the bodily health should, earlier or later, experience a baneful influence. The continued torment of mind proceeding from passions of this nature, can scarce be otherwise than detrimental to the physical constitution. In the stomach and liver, their effects are early and clearly evinced. Thus will the appetite and digestion become impaired, and the hepatic secretion be variously disordered, and sometimes partially or even entirely obstructed, when the bile, being absorbed into the

system, taints the complexion with that dark and bilious hue which is so characteristic of an unamiable or malignant temper. Wherefore the common expression, to turn black with anger, hatred, or revenge, it is not unlikely originated in just observation. It is a literal truth, although expressed in poetry, that one may

——— "Creep into the jaundice,
By being peevish."

Irritability and moroseness of temper may also occasion various inflammatory and nervous complaints, and those more especially to which there is a constitutional tendency. Gout, rheumatism, hysterics, nervous headaches, tic douloureux, and numerous other painful affections, are liable to be excited, or their fits to be renewed under such prejudicial influences.

Nothing surely can be more desirable, both as it concerns our moral and physical health, than a quiet resignation to the fate decreed us. Fretting and repining under unavoidable evils only adds to their burden, and to the eye of true philosophy shows a temper about as inconsistent as that exhibited by some of the heathen world in flagellating their gods for the calamities befalling them.

The condition of temper now occupying our consideration, is particularly injurious when the system is laboring under disease. It is well known to every observing physician, that fractious patients, other circumstances being the same, recover less promptly, and are more exposed to

relapses than those who bear their sufferings with more composure and resignation. And equally familiar is it to the surgeon, that under a bad state of temper, wounds heal less kindly, and when recently healed will even at times break out afresh. Likewise, that external inflammations pass less safely and regularly through their restorative processes, and that the pus of abscesses may be speedily transformed from a healthy to a morbid condition, under such unfriendly moral agency.

Regarding then merely our physical welfare, the importance of cultivating an amiableness of temper, of educating ourselves to meet with tranquilness the little ills and crosses of life, will not be denied. It is, after all, the minor evils, the trifling annoyances, or such as tend but to ruffle or fret our feelings, that are apt to be the least resolutely supported, and that oftentimes do more to mar our happiness, and impair our health, than even absolute and grave calamities. Many who would be impatient under the pricking of a pin, might submit with scarce a tremor or complaint to a grave and painful operation. It is only under strong occasions that the full energies of our nature are called forth. Our powers are aroused in correspondence with the emergencies they have to encounter. Thus it is only in lofty and responsible positions that the human character discovers its full force and dignity. Even the weak and timid soul will often astonish us by its patience and fortitude under great sufferings and dangers. Slight maladies of body, too, will frequently be marked by excessive irritability and unreasonable repining, while those of a more serious

character are oftener distinguished by unusual calmness and submission. Death is the most important of all events we are destined to encounter, and it is truly astonishing how the powers of the mind will frequently rise to meet it;—with what composure and resignation even the most timid and sensitive may encounter its approach. In children the moral powers will not rarely seem to be elevated as the physical yield, and the observation was made by Dr. Zimmerman, that they are never more amiable than in their last illness.

"We observe in children, who are sick and in a dangerous situation, a very unusual compliance in every thing, together with a degree of knowledge, which is the fruit only of reflection and experience, and a genius and eloquence far above their years."* It would seem a law of our being then, and truly a beneficent and consolatory one, and from which numerous moral reflections might be drawn, that the energies of the soul should be developed in accordance with the importance of the exigencies to be encountered—should mount above even death itself.

The immediate and annoyful physical effects of mental irritation are strikingly displayed in those of a nervous and sensitive temperament, when disturbed on retiring to rest, by unseasonable noises, as the barking of dogs, crying of children, thrumming of pianos, etc. Under such vexing circumstances, the action of the heart often becomes unnaturally accelerated, and each pulsation of it is painfully

* On Experience in Physic.

sensible. A disagreeable dryness, too, is commonly experienced in the mouth and throat, with feverishness, sometimes itching of the skin, and a general nervous agitation or restlessness, often more harassing than even definite and seated pain, and the health, as might be expected, remains disturbed through the whole of the subsequent day. Under the condition described, the nervous sensibility will sometimes be raised to such morbid acuteness, that the slightest sounds, even the ticking of a clock, will be almost insupportable.

Some persons are constitutionally irritable, and in such the infirmity will be found hard indeed of cure, as persons are seldom entirely reasoned out of their physical predispositions. I have known persons so excessively irritable in their temper, and exercising so little government over it, as to be but slightly, if at all removed, from moral insanity. "We not unfrequently," says Dr. Carpenter, "meet with individuals, still holding their place in society, who are accustomed to act so much upon *feeling*, and to be so little guided by *reason*, as to be scarcely regarded as sane; and a very little exaggeration of such a tendency causes the actions to be so injurious to the individual himself, or to those around him, that restraint is required, although the intellect is in no way disordered, nor are any of the feelings perverted. . . . . The habit of yielding to a natural infirmity of temper often leads into paroxysms of ungovernable rage, which, in their turn, pass into a state of maniacal excitement."*

* Human Physiology.

An irritable and fractious temper, whether due to native temperament, or other causes, becomes, necessarily, the instrument of its own punishment:

"Secum petulans amentia certat."

And it furthermore poisons the happiness of all within the circle of its influence. To so many occasions of annoyance, to so many petty vexations are we all, even the most fortunate of us, exposed, that the happiness of the naturally irritable man must be continually encountering obstacles, and his health consequently be ever liable to injury. Heavy indeed are the penalties to which we are oftentimes doomed for the native faults of our organization!

It will be seen from what has preceded, how essential it is, on physical as well as moral considerations, that children be timely educated to control their tempers. Those who have been too fondly indulged, or to whose passions an indiscreet license has been permitted, will be likely to enjoy less uniform good health,—to suffer more frequent disorders of their digestive organs, than such as have been the subjects of a stricter and wiser moral discipline.

"Although," says Dr. Reid, "an evenness and quietness of temper may, in many cases, appear connate or constitutional, equanimity ought not on that account to be regarded as altogether out of the reach of acquisition. The feelings which have been subject to an habitual restraint will seldom be found to rise above their proper level. Disproportionate emotions may often, in early life at least, be cor-

rected, in the same manner as deformities and irregularities of bodily shape are, by means of constant pressure, forced into a more natural figure and dimension."* "By too great indulgence and a want of moral discipline, the passions acquire greater power, and a character is formed subject to caprice and to violent emotions: a predisposition to insanity is thus laid in the temper and moral affections of the individual. The exciting causes of madness have greater influence on persons of such habits than on those whose feelings are regulated."†

"We take great care," says Esquirol, speaking of the vicious morals and education of France as causes of insanity, "to form the mind, but seem to forget that the heart, like the mind, has need of education.

"The ridiculous and deplorable tenderness of parents, subjects to the caprices of infancy the reason of mature age.

"Accustomed to follow all his inclinations, and not being habituated by discipline to contradiction, the child, having arrived at maturity, cannot resist the vicissitudes and reverses by which life is agitated. On the least adversity insanity bursts forth; his feeble reason being deprived of its support, while the passions are without rein, or any kind of restraint." The same author relates the case of a lady nineteen years of age, of a sanguine temperament, who, having never experienced the least contradiction, was exceedingly choleric, and of extreme susceptibility. Under the

* On Nervous Affections, etc.

† Prichard on Insanity.

smallest provocation she became so irritated as to give herself up to the most insane acts of anger. She abused her mother and friends, and threatened both their lives and her own. After each attack of such fury she fell into a state of prostration, and was, after a while, restored to calmness of body and mind. If she attempted to restrain the outbreak of her anger, she experienced severe sufferings. Her head became swollen, her face and eyes injected with blood, and this state was only relieved, by allowing vent to her rage.

Anger in its various degrees and modifications may grow out of, or the propension to it may be aggravated by various morbid conditions of our bodily organs. Unhealthy states of the liver are well known to render the temper suspicious, peevish, or morose; and a large share of our moral infirmities were ascribed by the ancients to an excess in the secretion of this organ. Hence comes it that the term gall, or bile, is used synonymously with anger, malignity, or bitterness of temper. And choleric, which signifies passionate, is derived from the Greek word χολη, *cholee*, meaning bile.

In many morbid affections of the stomach, the subjects become exceedingly irritable, venting their spleen upon every body and every thing about them; and inflammation of this organ will sometimes induce violent fits of passion. It is doubtless through the morbid excitement which they awaken in the mucous or inner gastric coat, that stimulating food and drinks will, in some constitutions, always enkindle an irascibleness of feeling. The liberal use of wine or spirit is, in certain individuals, uniformly followed by fearful out-

breaks of anger. It is said of Lord Byron, that wine made him "savage instead of mirthful." The unhappy state of temper under which most persons awake on the morning subsequent to a debauch is, I believe, mainly owing to the morbid and irritable condition left in, and the depraved secretions acting upon, the delicate lining of the stomach; a part, than which few, if any, in the whole animal economy have closer sympathies with our moral nature. Hence may be derived an additional argument, if such were needed, in favor of temperance both in meat and drink, and one especially applicable to those of excitable feelings.

There are certain conditions of the nervous system attended with uncommon irascibility. In some morbid states of the brain, exceeding irritability, with frequent and uncontrollable outbreaks of anger, are apt to be displayed; as at the commencement of acute hydrocephalus in children, and of other inflammatory affections of this organ. A large proportion of epileptic subjects are morbidly irritable, and liable to strong agitations of passion; or, as said by Esquirol, exceedingly susceptible, irascible, ungovernable.

Insanity, at its commencement, is very often marked by impatience, irritability, and bursts of anger, and in its progress perhaps by maniacal rage or fury, either continued, or happening only at certain times of the day, or monthly, or at particular seasons. Some cases of mania consist of one almost uninterrupted fit of violent anger against every body and every thing. Or the insane person may exhibit a general moroseness of character, or a malignant hatred toward, and a disposition to inflict cruelty and even death

upon particular persons, especially such as are most near and dear to him in his rational mind. This strong propensity to fits of rage, and the destruction of life, sometimes constitutes the only evidence of insanity, the mind remaining in all other respects apparently rational, and the case is then classed under that variety of mental aberration termed monomania. A case of this nature is related by M. Pinel, and cited by Dr. Prichard, which was clearly referrible to physical disease, probably of the nervous system.

"A man who had previously followed a mechanical occupation, but was afterwards confined at Bicêtre, experienced, *at regular intervals*, fits of rage ushered in by the following symptoms: At first he experienced a sensation of burning heat in the bowels, with an intense thirst and obstinate constipation; this sense of heat spread by degrees over the breast, neck, and face, with a bright color; sometimes it became still more intense, and produced violent and frequent pulsations in the arteries of those parts, as if they were going to burst; at last the nervous affection reached the brain, and then the patient was seized with the most irresistible sanguinary propensity; and if he could lay hold of any sharp instrument, he was ready to sacrifice the first person that came in his way. In other respects he enjoyed the free exercise of his reason; even during these fits he replied directly to questions put to him, and showed no kind of incoherence in his ideas, no sign of delirium; he even deeply felt all the horror of his situation, and was often penetrated with remorse, as if he was responsible for this mad propensity. Before his confinement at Bicêtre a fit of madness

seized him in his own house; he immediately warned his wife of it, to whom he was much attached, and he had only time to cry out to her to run away lest he should put her to a violent death. At Bicêtre there appeared the same fits of periodical fury, the same mechanical propensity to commit atrocious actions, directed very often against the inspector, whose mildness and compassion he was continually praising. This internal combat between a sane reason in opposition to sanguinary cruelty, reduced him to the brink of despair, and he has often endeavored to terminate by death this insupportable struggle."

There are certain states of the functions of the skin, which are accompanied with an extreme fretfulness of temper. In what are familiarly termed colds, and under the influence of our chilling easterly winds on the sea-coast, many persons become excessively irritable. At the commencement of some diseases of the lungs, a similar condition of moral feeling is displayed. And in disorders of the urinary system, a peculiarly anxious and irascible disposition of mind is very frequently discovered.

Anger, arising out of conditions of our physical organization, must, of course, be directed, not to its real cause, but toward things and persons without, and which have no agency in its production. Thus may we suspect and maltreat those nearest and dearest to us, for no other reason than that our stomachs or livers are not executing as they should do their respective offices. And most persons must, I think, have remarked how apt one is to dream of quarrelling with his friends when going to bed on an indigestible supper. It is

plain, then, that the cook will often have far more concern in the domestic tranquillity of families, than human philosophy has yet suspected. And would this important functionary but cultivate his art in reference to the facility of digestion, as well as to the gratification of the palate, he might contribute more to the happiness of society than nine-tenths of the boasted moral reformers of the time.

CHAPTER XVI.

FEAR.—ITS DEFINITION.—BEING ESSENTIAL TO SELF-PRESERVATION, IT BELONGS INSTINCTIVELY TO ALL ANIMALS.—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MORAL AND PHYSICAL COURAGE.—CERTAIN CONDITIONS OF OUR BODILY ORGANS AND FUNCTIONS BEGET A MORBID TIMIDITY OF CHARACTER.—CERTAIN INSTINCTS CONQUER FEAR.—DELICATE AND NERVOUS CONSTITUTIONS ARE SOMETIMES ENDOWED WITH A REMARKABLE DEGREE OF COURAGE AND FIRMNESS.

Fear, like anger, is grounded on the principle of self-preservation, though the preservative acts to which these two passions incite are of a very different nature. Thus while anger is defensive and offensive, stimulating us to repel or assault and destroy the causes which threaten our safety or happiness, fear urges to avoidance or flight, and it is only when escape has become hopeless that our guardian instincts force us to resistance, or even attack.

Fear being, as already said, based on the instinct of self-preservation, belongs of necessity to all animals; and it will commonly be found bearing a direct relation to the feebleness and defencelessness of the individual, circumstances

rendering it the more needful. It may be set down as a general truth, though like most general truths admitting of occasional exceptions, that a sense of weakness begets timidity, while a consciousness of strength imparts boldness of character. Hence it is that fear is more especially conspicuous in the female constitution; I mean in all such circumstances of danger as demand energy of resistance, or strength of physical action, for under real calamities and sufferings, where endurance alone is required, woman will oftentimes display a degree of firmness of which our own stronger sex might well be proud. Woman looks to the strong arm and bold spirit of man for protection and defence, while he turns to her more delicate and passive nature for consolation and support under those ills of life against which his courage is powerless and his strength vain.

Different individuals are by nature more or less susceptible to the action of fear. Some even from their early childhood are notable for their cowardice, while others are equally so for their intrepidity. Habit and education, however, will certainly do a great deal toward conquering a native timorousness of character.

In our own species, courage admits of the distinction, generally recognized, into physical and moral. The former is constitutional, though habit, by its well known influence on the vital organism, operates to increase it. It is frequently called strength of nerve, and answers to the courage seen in the lower animals. The latter, or moral courage, presupposes a supremacy of the higher faculties, and is therefore peculiar to man. Thus the naturally timid,

pricked on by duty, honor, pride, have not rarely become bold and successful warriors. And the most delicate and effeminate in body, through the ascendant influence of their moral nature, have faced dangers and borne sufferings, under which naturally stouter hearts and firmer nerves would have quailed;—have offered up their lives in the cause of truth, their honor, or their country. Hence may we account for the superior firmness always displayed in a just cause.

"Thrice is he arm'd, that hath his quarrel just."

Moral courage belongs more especially to cultivated and intellectual man. His will, strengthened by new motives, learns to restrain the trembling nerve, and to subject the weaker flesh to the dominion of the braver spirit. But in the uncultivated and ignorant, it is the mere animal or brute courage that is chiefly exhibited. Therefore it is, that in difficult and hazardous undertakings, the greatest fortitude and perseverance are almost always manifested on the part of the leaders, whose resolution is strengthened by a higher intelligence and more weighty responsibility.

Fear will oftentimes proceed rather from ignorance, or mistaken judgment unduly magnifying the hazard, than from any actual deficiency in fortitude. Familiarity with any particular danger, conformably to a law of the animal constitution, serves to lessen the apprehension of it, though not necessarily emboldening toward others of a dissimilar nature. The mariner looks calmly on the ocean tempest, which would strike dismay to the heart even of the consti-

tutionally far braver landsman. The physician, although he may be naturally timid, walks undisturbed amid the desolating pestilence from which the hardiest courage flees in terror. And the delicate female, who would tremble and turn pale at even the sight or sound of a warlike instrument, might bear the pains of sickness and the approach of death, with more serenity and fortitude than the soldier of a hundred battles.

Good health, as a general rule, conduces to boldness, while infirmity of body tends to beget a pusillanimity of character. There are very many morbid states of the system, which may so depress the courage as to transform even the most daring into cowards. Disorders of the stomach and liver are particularly apt to engender false apprehensions, and weaken the natural fortitude, much more so, as a general truth, than more dangerous, or even fatal maladies of the lungs. Agues, and other malarious diseases, almost always render their subjects timid and apprehensive. Dr. Macculloch tells us that fear is so remarkable a character in these affections, that in some parts of the Mediterranean, where they are endemic, the only name by which they are known to the common people, is Scanto, meaning fear or fright. Long continued exposure to the infection of intermittent fevers will oftentimes, of itself, occasion irresoluteness and timidity.

"A gentleman was exposed to the emanations from a drain or sewer, which had become obstructed in his own house in London. He was soon afterwards seized with an ague, although he had not been out of the metropolis for

years. The ague was easily cured by the proper remedies; but, for a long time afterwards, it harassed him in quite a different shape—namely, in that of a sudden dread or horror of—he knew not what. It usually recurred at the same hour of the day, and would last from two to three or four hours, during which the individual suffered the miseries of the damned. I know hundreds of people who had been exposed to malaria in hot and unhealthy climates, and who were harassed, for years after their return to this country, by these periodical horrors."* There are some diseases, however, which through the unnatural stimulation they promote in the brain and nervous system, arouse even to a morbid exaltation of courage. There are also certain instincts which completely conquer the passion of fear. Thus the most timid mother, forgetful of herself, will rush into any peril, into fire or flood, to save the life of her offspring. It is said the hare will attack the eagle in defence of her young.

Although, as before said, courage generally attends good health and physical vigor, and is wanting in the delicate, weakly, and sensitive, yet remarkable exceptions to this rule are sometimes encountered. Thus the pale and spare in body, weakly in constitution, and delicate in temperament, will sometimes exhibit the most extraordinary energy, firmness, and boldness of character. Disheartened by no obstacle, dismayed by no danger, they are fitted for the most difficult and daring enterprises. The rash and reso-

* Johnson on Change of Air.

lute Cassius, of whom Cæsar stood in such apprehension, is represented as frail and spare in body, and of a nervous temperament. And Cæsar himself is recorded to have been thin and delicate, of a weakly constitution, and subject to epilepsy. The frail, sensitive, nervous female, who would shudder at the buzzing of a beetle, will sometimes be found adequate to the most daring acts of courage. There are many persons who always seem timid and irresolute under the ordinary and trifling dangers and difficulties of life, but display an exalted heroism on occasions of great trial and peril. It is a remarkable circumstance in the living actions, in the functions of mind, as well as body, that while slighter stimuli or influences are often yielded to, inordinate ones call forth a powerful and successful resistance.

True courage is a most desirable quality of mind; it is promotive of health and happiness, and essential to, and by the Greeks and Romans was used synonymously with virtue. A timid man may be afraid to act right, may not dare to do his duty when opposed by dangers and difficulties. Of this virtue every body is ambitious, and none more so than the coward, as proved by his vainglorious affectation of it. Indeed, all of us are prone to assume both the intellectual and moral qualities in which we are most deficient. Thus, the fool affects wisdom, the strumpet modesty, the knave honesty, the niggard liberality, and the poltroon bravery.

CHAPTER XVII.

FEAR CONTINUED.—ACUTE FEAR DESCRIBED.—FASCINATION HAS BY SOME WRITERS BEEN ASCRIBED TO THE EXTRAVAGANT INFLUENCE OF FEAR.—REMARKABLE EFFECTS IN THE CURE OF DISEASES THAT HAVE OFTEN FOLLOWED EXCESSIVE FRIGHT.

FEAR, like the other passions, is exhibited in various shades or degrees. It may be slight and transient, or so aggravated as completely to dethrone the judgment, and jeopard, not only the health, but even the existence of its subject.

Fear is one of the most painful of the passions, and its effects, both on the mental and bodily functions are truly astonishing. Under its powerful influence the fiercest animals are rendered gentle and subservient to our will and purposes.

In acute fear, the effects induced on the physical organization and its functions are very remarkable, and oftentimes exceedingly distressing. The respiration becomes immediately and strikingly affected. Thus, on the first impulse of the passion, owing to a spasmodic contraction of the diaphragm, a sudden inspiration takes place, directly

succeeded by an incomplete expiration; the latter being, as it would seem, interrupted, or cut short by a spasm of the throat, windpipe, or lungs. Hence arises the irregular and convulsive breathing so characteristic of extreme fear. Under its action the respiration almost always grows short, rapid, and tremulous,—as may be seen in the inferior animals when frightened,—and a painful sense of suffocation is experienced in the chest. The voice becomes embarrassed, trembles, and, in consequence of the diminution and inspissation of the secretions of the mouth and throat, is dry, husky, thick, and unnatural. Even temporary speechlessness may be induced under the first shock of this passion.

"Obstupui, steteruntque comæ, et vox faucibus hæsit."

The heart, likewise, suffers severely from the influence of acute fear. It becomes oppressed, constricted; flutters and palpitates, and is variously agitated; and the pulse is consequently small, feeble, rapid, and oftentimes irregular.

The viscera of the abdomen, too, not unfrequently experience disagreeable sensations, unnatural or spasmodic contractions, and a morbid increase of their secretions. Sometimes vomiting, but oftener a diarrhœa, perhaps involuntary, takes place; and jaundice has, in occasional instances, quickly followed its operation. The urine, also, is augmented, pale or limpid, and the desire to void it becomes frequent, urgent, and many times irresistible.

The blood, as might be anticipated, abandons the sur-

face, the face turns pallid, and the skin becomes universally cold, contracted, and rough, like goose-flesh, and as a consequence of this contraction, the hairs growing from it are elevated, or in the common phrase, stand on end, or if not, they seem as though they did to the affrighted individual. Chills often spread themselves over the surface, or over portions of it, sometimes as it were in streams; and cold sweats, partial or general, not unusually break forth. About the forehead, especially, a cold, dewy sweat will frequently be seen from the influence of great fear.

Partial tremors, as of the limbs, or a general shuddering and shaking, and chattering of the teeth, as under extreme cold, or in the first stage of a paroxysm of ague, are also common phenomena. Ague, in fact, is derived from a Gothic word (*agis*), meaning terror, on account of the similarity of effects between it and this passion. It is worthy to be noted here, that these same symptoms produced by fear, when the result of morbid physical states, are apt to be connected with an unnatural degree of timidity or apprehension. On the effect of agues in producing such conditions of mind I have previously remarked. And I feel well satisfied that we possess less courage if chilled and shivering under the influence of cold, than when the surface is warm and comfortable, and the blood plays freely in its extreme vessels. But to proceed with the physical manifestations of fear:— Under its forcible action the eyes glare wildly, as though they would start from their sockets, and the whole countenance is drawn into a painful and repulsive expression. A convulsive sobbing, accompanied by a profuse secretion of

tears, and in delicate and sensitive females even severe paroxysms of hysterics will not rarely ensue. The muscular system may likewise become strongly convulsed, or its energies be temporarily suspended, and the individual be rendered dumb and motionless. In extreme cases the whole chest, with the upper part of the abdomen, or region of the stomach, are affected with an agonizing sense of constriction, and fainting often supervenes.

The depressing effects of fear just described are not uncommonly succeeded by reaction; anger perhaps being aroused toward the cause of alarm, and calling forth extravagant muscular efforts to repel or destroy it. Few of our passions, in truth, long maintain their simple and original character, but others, and of a different nature, are engendered by, and become blended with them. And that such should be the case would seem, in many instances, to be even necessary to our welfare; the newly-awakened passion serving to counteract the threatening consequences of the primary one. Thus will the excitement of anger act as a cordial to the depression of fear; and the depression of fear, on the other hand, as a wholesome sedative to the excitement of anger.

Generally, as was before observed, the first impulse of simple fear, when the muscles retain their powers, is to provoke flight, and which is often precipitated with a degree of force which would have been quite impossible in a more tranquil condition of mind. This act is truly instinctive, and therefore irresistible, except under the counter-working influence of some other passion. But when escape is found

impracticable, then will the individual be often driven to the most fierce and desperate resistance, and thus even the greatest cowards have sometimes acquired the fame of heroes.

> "To be furious,
> Is to be frighted out of fear; and in that mood,
> The dove will peck the estridge."

Fear, in its most aggravated degree, acquires the name of terror; and, under certain circumstances, and in certain constitutions, remarkable results have followed its strong impression on the nervous system. That peculiar condition which it has been supposed some animals have the power of producing in certain others, called fascination, has by many been ascribed to the agency of terror, which paralyzing, as is thought, all voluntary muscular action in the victim, renders him an easy prey to his destroyer.

That some species of serpents possess this fascinating influence over birds—even of forcing them, by a gradual and irresistible movement, actually to fly into their devouring jaws—is not merely a popular belief, but has been maintained by those whose names sustain a prominent place in the annals of science. The following citation relating to this subject is from M. Broussais, an author whom I have before quoted, and whose writings were at one time held in no ordinary repute by many medical men of high rank, both in Europe and America. It certainly shows an easy faith, and a strange process of reasoning in its support. It is brought in under the head of instinct.

"If we examine instinct in the prey threatened by the voracity of the snake, we discover something very extraordinary. What is the power which compels the tomtit, perched upon a neighboring bush, to sacrifice itself for the gratification of the wants of an animal creeping upon the ground, at a distance from it? The reptile obstinately pursues it with its looks. So long as the bird does not perceive the snake' it runs no risk; but if the former rests its eyes for a few moments on those of its pursuer, all is lost, for it will become its prey. The bird is terrified—it cannot abstain from looking fixedly at the snake—it flies from branch to branch, as if with a view of escaping, and yet it gradually approaches its enemy. This latter continues gazing at it, presenting, at the same time, an open mouth, and the victim finally flies of itself into it. These are not mere fables, but facts, which few shepherds have not had occasion to notice. The public papers have lately detailed the manner in which a boa-constrictor, conveyed to Europe in an English or American ship, was fed. The journalist relates, that those who took care of this monstrous snake, when they conceived that it was hungry, opened its iron cage, and presented to it a goat (a number of which had been shipped for its use); as soon as the animal perceived its prey, it unfolded itself, and looked at it fixedly, with open mouth. The goat, after hesitating some time, as if undecided between the instinct of self-preservation and that attracting it towards the monster, precipitated itself head-foremost into the living gulf which was to serve as its tomb."

"I do not see," observes the same author, in relation to

his above cited remarks, "why an animal, destined to become the prey of another, should not be compelled to yield itself up, when this latter is deprived of other means requisite for seizing it. It is generally admitted that a number of animals are born only to be devoured. The end of destruction is as much in nature as that of formation, and the acts of instinct which tend to deliver up a prey to its enemy, are as natural as others, the object of which is to avoid danger, or gratify an appetite. Now it appears evident that, in order to attain these ends, the Author of all things has invariably made use of the same means, namely, instinctive impulses." *

Every other writer on the subject of instincts, so far at least as I am informed, has regarded their final purpose to be preservative only; but the present author appears to have introduced a new one, leading its possessor into destruction for another's support. In another place, Broussais, in the most unequivocal manner, refers fascination to the influence of terror.

Facts, were their details to be relied upon, are certainly not wanting to substantiate such a fascinating influence in serpents. Scarce a peasant, or even a country schoolboy, but can bring some instance toward its support. That birds are sometimes seen fluttering in apparent alarm about and near these reptiles, will not be disputed. But this is oftentimes only in defence of their nest which the snake is invading, they being actuated by an instinct whose end is the

* Physiology applied to Pathology,

preservation of the species, instead of one urging them to destruction for the support of their enemy. This power of fascination then, although far from being established, can hardly be ranked among the mere superstitions of ignorance and credulity. The propensity, almost resistless, which some persons feel when on the verge of a precipice, to cast themselves down into inevitable destruction, is equally as strange as that a bird should be impelled by an invincible disposition to fly into the deadly jaws of its devourer.

But to resume my principal topic. Extreme terror will, in certain instances, instead of depressing and paralyzing the nervous power, arouse it into new and astonishing action. We read that it has even caused the dumb to speak, and the paralytic to walk; and that the most painful and obstinate diseases have been known suddenly to yield under its potent influence. It is related in Herodotus that during the storm of Sardis, "a Persian meeting Crœsus was, through ignorance of his person, about to kill him. The king, overwhelmed by his calamity, took no care to avoid the blow or escape death; but his dumb son, when he saw the violent designs of the Persian, overcome with astonishment and terror, exclaimed aloud, 'Oh, man, do not kill Crœsus!' This was the first time he had ever articulated, but he retained the faculty of speech from this event as long as he lived." We have instances enough, however, and of a less apocryphal character, of the remarkable curative effects of extravagant fear. Dr. Whytt observes, that it will frequently put a stop to convulsive motions and spasms, and sometimes succeed after other remedies have failed, and

gives a striking instance in illustration.* A common method of stopping hiccup is by startling the person affected. Hemorrhage will sometimes be checked by the action of sudden fright.

Van Swieten records the case of a man who, under the influence of sudden terror, recovered from hemiplegy, or palsy of one half of the body, that had afflicted him for years. "A woman who had been paralytic from the age of six to forty-four, suddenly recovered the perfect use of her limbs, when she was very much terrified during a severe thunder storm, and was making violent efforts to escape from a chamber in which she had been left alone. A man who had many years been paralytic, recovered in the same manner when his house was on fire."† Gout has also immediately disappeared through the operation of unexpected fright. An old author relates of one of his patients, suffering under a paroxysm of this disease, that having his feet and legs wrapped in cataplasms of turnips, a hog entering his room and beginning to feed on the turnips, so alarmed him that he began to run and jump, and all his gouty pains straightway vanished.

Intermittent fevers or agues have likewise disappeared from the strong impulse of this same passion. Dr. Fordyce tells of a man afflicted with a fever of this description, that his brother having led him to walk by the edge of a milldam, pushed him suddenly into the water; and which, as he

* Observations on Nervous Diseases, &c.

† Abercrombie on the Brain; cited from Diemerbroeck.

was unable to swim, naturally put him into a very great fright. He was speedily, however, taken out, and from that time forth had no further paroxysm of his disease.* A gentleman, laboring under an obstinate ague, and who had a great dread of rats, happened to be shut up in a room with one of them, which jumping upon him, caused such fright as completely to expel his ague. Among the remedies of intermittent fevers, Dr. Cullen ranks an impression of horror. The many charms, and hateful and disgusting superstitious remedies which have been so often employed, and sometimes successfully in agues, doubtless operate through the impression of horror, dread, awe, which they produce on the mind. Such are spiders, the chips of a gallows, or the halter of an executed criminal worn round the neck.

"Elias Ashmole, in his Diary, April 11, 1681, has entered, 'I took early in the morning a good dose of elixir, and hung three spiders about my neck, and drove my ague away. Deo Gratias!'"†

How the classical remedy for a quartan ague, of placing the fourth book of Homer's Iliad under the patient's head, operates, I am not prepared to explain.

To show the effect of a superstitious impression,—which must be a modification of fear,—upon the mind in the cure of the present disease, I will venture to cite the following interesting narrative, with which some of my readers are doubtless already familiar. It relates to Sir John Holt, Lord Chief

* Dissertations on Fevers.

† Pettigrew's Medical Superstitions.

Justice of the Court of King's Bench, 1709, who in his youth appears to have been extremely wild. "Being once engaged with some of his rakish friends in a trip into the country, in which they had spent all their money, it was agreed they should try their fortune separately. Holt arrived at an inn at the end of a straggling village, ordered his horse to be taken care of, bespoke a supper and a bed. He then strolled into the kitchen, where he observed a little girl of thirteen shivering with an ague. Upon making inquiry respecting her, the landlady told him that she was her only child, and had been ill nearly a year, notwithstanding all the assistance she could procure for her from physic. He gravely shook his head at the doctors, bade her be under no further concern, for that her daughter should never have another fit. He then wrote a few unintelligible words in a court hand on a scrap of parchment, which had been the direction affixed to a hamper, and rolling it up, directed that it should be bound upon the girl's wrist, and there allowed to remain until she was well. The ague returned no more; and Holt, having remained in the house a week, called for his bill. 'God bless you, sir,' said the old woman, 'you're nothing in my debt, I'm sure. I wish, on the contrary, that I was able to pay you for the cure which you have made of my daughter. Oh! if I had had the happiness to see you ten months ago, it would have saved me forty pounds.' With pretended reluctance he accepted his accommodation as a recompense, and rode away. Many years elapsed, Holt advanced in his profession of the law, and went a circuit, as one of the judges of the Court of King's Bench, into the

same county, where, among other criminals brought before him, was an old woman under a charge of witchcraft. To support this accusation, several witnesses swore that the prisoner had a spell with which she could either cure such cattle as were sick, or destroy those that were well, and that in the use of this spell she had been lately detected, and that it was now ready to be produced in court. Upont his statement the judge desired it might be handed up to him. It was a dirty ball, wrapped round with several rags, and bound with packthread. These coverings he carefully removed, and beneath them found a piece of parchment, which he immediately recognized as his own youthful fabrication. For a few moments he remained silent—at length recollecting himself, he addressed the jury to the following effect:—'Gentlemen, I must now relate a particular of my life, which very ill suits my present character and the station in which I sit; but to conceal it would be to aggravate the folly for which I ought to atone, to endanger innocence, and to countenance superstition. This bauble, which you suppose to have the power of life and death, is a senseless scroll which I wrote with my own hand and gave to this woman, whom for no other reason you accuse as a witch.' He then related the particulars of the transaction, with such an effect upon the minds of the people, that his old landlady was the last person tried for witchcraft in that county."*

Epileptic fits—the frequent result of a false or morbid religious excitement or enthusiasm, aided by the principle

* Pettigrew's Medical Superstitions.

of sympathy, in the feeble-minded and ignorant—may often be counteracted through the passion of fear. An intelligent minister of Shetland, in Scotland, being much annoyed, and the devotions of his church impeded, on his first introduction into the country, by the frequent occurrence of these convulsions, "obviated their repetition, by assuring his parishioners that no treatment was more effectual than immersion in cold water; and as his kirk was fortunately contiguous to a fresh-water lake, he gave notice that attendants should be at hand, during divine service, to insure the proper means of cure. The sequel need scarcely be told. The fear of being carried out of the church, and into the water, acted like a charm—not a single naïad was made, and the worthy minister, for many years, had reason to boast of one of the best regulated congregations in Shetland."*

The cure of these convulsions in the parish of Northmaven, in which they were once very frequent, is said to have been effected by a rough fellow of a kirk officer tossing a woman affected with them, and with whom he had been often troubled, into a ditch of water. She was never known to be thus affected afterwards, and the disease was kept off in others by a dread of the like treatment.

Boerhaave appears to have operated successfully with the passion of fear, in the house of the poor, at Haerlem, in the cure of convulsions, which, through the force of imitation—a propensity so strong in our nature—had spread to

* Quoted in Hecker's Epidemics of the Middle Ages, from Hibbert's Description of the Shetland Islands, &c.

almost all the boys and girls who were its inmates. All medical treatment having proved unsuccessful in the hands of the physicians of the place, application was made to Boerhaave, who, observing the manner in which the fits spread, determined to try the effects of a remedy which would act strongly upon the imagination. He accordingly had several portable furnaces, on which were placed burning coals, and iron hooks, of a figure suited for his purpose; and then gave directions that, as all medicines had failed, and he knew of no other remedy, the next one seized with a paroxysm, whether boy or girl, should be burnt on the naked arm with the heated iron, even to the bone. All became so much terrified at the thought of this cruel remedy, that they struggled with all their might to keep off the fits, and were completely successful.

Dr. Cooke cites, from the eighteenth volume of the Medical and Physical Journal, the following instance of the disappearance of epilepsy from sudden fright. "A lady in the prime of life, of robust habit, was for four years afflicted with this complaint in a violent degree—the paroxysms returning three or four times a week, continuing for some hours, and leaving the patient in a state of stupor. A variety of medicines had been tried in vain, and the case was considered hopeless, when, on receiving a dreadful mental shock, by the circumstance of her daughter being accidentally burnt to death, the disease entirely and finally left her."

Settled insanity has been removed by immoderate fright. An old remedy, indeed, for this disease, and one

of high authority, was to terrify the maniac by throwing him into the water, and keeping him there till nearly drowned. Esquirol relates the case of a lady under his charge, who believed she was damned, and had the devil inside of her, being cured by the threat of cold baths, of which she had the utmost dread, every time she gave herself up to her peculiar insane notions and fears. He also gives instances of the complete cure of furious maniacs, through terror of the red-hot iron, with which, as a remedial measure, they were about to be cauterized.

In the thirty-first volume of the Medico-Chirurgical Review, we read the following case, quoted from a Prussian Medical Journal: "A man, between thirty and forty years of age, had been, from the year 1827 to 1831, affected with an extreme degree of insanity, amounting almost to idiocy, and alternating with periodic fits of raving madness. His condition bordered on bestiality, and none dared to approach him in his maniacal paroxysms. His case was deemed quite hopeless; and, for the two following years, he vegetated, so to speak, in the public lunatic house of the place. A fire having accidentally broken out near his cell, his mental powers, which had so long slumbered, were suddenly aroused; and Dr. Ollenroth, upon visiting him a few days afterwards, found him perfectly intelligent, and assiduously occupied with some domestic arrangements. He had no recollection of his former condition. All that he remembered, was simply that, on the approach of the flames, he felt himself seized with an indescribable sense of terror, that he sprung up from his bed, and that he suddenly regained his intelligence."

Many minor affections are also known to be at once removed or suspended, under the strong impression of fear, as toothache, and other nervous pains; hypochondriasis, seasickness, etc.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FEAR CONTINUED.—DEATH IS SOMETIMES THE CONSEQUENCE OF EXTRAVAGANT FEAR.—VARIOUS PAINFUL DISEASES ARE NOT UNFREQUENTLY THE CONSEQUENCE OF ITS OPERATION.—THE TERRORS AND MORBID EXCITEMENTS OF RELIGION ARE OFTENTIMES FOLLOWED BY THE MOST MELANCHOLY EFFECTS ON MIND AND BODY.—THESE EFFECTS MAY BECOME GREATLY EXTENDED THROUGH THE PRINCIPLE OF IMITATION OR SYMPATHY.—TERROR MAY OPERATE THROUGH THE MOTHER ON HER UNBORN OFFSPRING.—ITS EFFECTS ON THE HAIR AND DIFFERENT SECRETIONS.—THE FEARS AWAKENED IN THE IMAGINATION DURING SLEEP, WHEN FREQUENT AND IMMODERATE, MAY BE FRAUGHT WITH SERIOUS INJURY TO HEALTH.

TERROR is sometimes instantly fatal, at once destroying the nervous energy, and suppressing the action of the heart; or it may bring on hemorrhages or convulsions, quickly terminating in death. Children and females being generally more sensitive and susceptible in their nervous system, are most liable to become the victims of fear.

Montaigne informs us, that at the siege of St. Pol, a town in France, "a gentleman was seized with such a fright, that he sunk down dead in the breach without any wound."

Marcellus Donatus tells of a child who instantly fell dead in a field on seeing, in the morning twilight, two persons clothed in black suddenly appear by his side. Another child was so frightened by the report of a cannon from a vessel while he was bathing in the sea, that he instantly fell into convulsions, and died in fifteen minutes.

An old writer relates of a nun, that she was so terrified on seeing herself surrounded by hostile soldiers with drawn swords, that the blood suddenly flowed from all the outlets of the body, and she immediately perished in their presence.

Broussais gives the case of a lady, who, on feeling a living frog fall into her bosom from the claws of a bird of prey, while she was sitting on the grass, was instantly seized with such a profuse bleeding from the lungs, that she survived but a few minutes.

A case is told by Pechlin* of a lady, who, upon looking at the comet of 1681, through a telescope, became so affected with terror, that she died in a few days.

Predictions of death are sometimes punctually fulfilled through the influence of fear upon the imagination. Lord Littleton, it seems to be well authenticated, died at the exact moment at which his fancied vision had forewarned him his death would take place. The superstitious subjects of such hallucinations have sometimes been preserved from death, which they believed was to happen at a fixed time, and for which their terrors seemed to be fast preparing them, by putting back the hands of the clock, or, as in the

* Observ. Med., lib. iii, observ. 23.

case related by Dr. Darwin, by administering a dose of opium, so as to cause the person to sleep beyond the predicted period.

It is related of a person sentenced to be bled to death, that though the execution of the sentence was only feigned, by causing warm water, after his eyes were blinded, to trickle down his arm, yet the fearful impression on his imagination that the blood was flowing from his veins, destroyed his life as effectually as if the punishment had been actually accomplished. The fear of the axe, too, has sometimes caused death as surely as its fall. A malefactor, as we read, being condemned to decapitation, a reprieve arrived just as his head had been laid upon the block, but life was found to be already extinguished. "In Lesinsky's voyage round the world, there is an account of a religious sect in the Sandwich Islands, who arrogate to themselves the power of praying people to death. Whoever incurs their displeasure, receives notice that the homicide litany is about to begin; and such are the effects of imagination, that the very notice is frequently sufficient with these poor people to produce the effect."*

"Some young girls went one day a little way out of town to see a person who had been executed, and who was hung in chains. One of them threw several stones at the gibbet, and at last struck the body with such violence as to make it move; at which the girl was so much terrified, that she imagined the dead person was alive, came down from

* Cited by Dr. Reid, in his Essays on Nervous Diseases.

the gibbet, and ran after her. She hastened home, and not being able to conquer the idea, fell into strong convulsions, and died."*

The following case from the same author just quoted, will serve to show the hazard of operating upon the timidity of children, as a means of punishment:

"A schoolmistress, for some trifling offence, most foolishly put a child into a dark cellar for an hour. The child was greatly terrified, and cried bitterly. Upon returning to her parents in the evening, she burst into tears, and begged that she might not be put into the cellar; the parents thought this extremely odd, and assured her that there was no danger of their being guilty of so great an act of cruelty; but it was difficult to pacify her, and when put to bed she passed a restless night. On the following day she had fever, during which she frequently exclaimed, 'Do not put me in the cellar.' The fourth day after, she was taken to Sir A. Cooper, in a high state of fever, with delirium, frequently muttering, 'Pray don't put me in the cellar.' When Sir Astley inquired the reason, he found that the parents had learned the punishment to which she had been subjected. He ordered what was likely to relieve her, but she died in a week after this unfeeling conduct."

Terror, although, as seen, it may occasion instant or speedy death, yet is more apt to be followed by various disorders of mind and body, either slight and transient, or serious and lasting. Deafness, dumbness, blindness, loss of

* Pettigrew; cited from Platerus.

memory, dropsies, erysipelas, and various cutaneous eruptions have speedily ensued to fright.

"Some time ago," says Zimmerman, "I had the care of a poor woman of seventy years of age, who had an erysipelatous fever, which was very long and dangerous in its course, and was apparently brought on by the dread of an apparition. This poor woman lived in a lonely house which had the reputation of being haunted, and she one night fancied she saw in the person of a large mastiff, the much-talked-of spirit. Her terror was excessive, she shrieked out and fell down in a state of insensibility. When she came to herself she complained of anxiety, sickness at the stomach, and extreme headache, the next day she had considerable fever, and on the day following her head was exceedingly inflamed, and a great part of it covered with an erysipelatous eruption."*

Severe fainting fits are not unfrequently its consequence, and which have continued rapidly succeeding each other for hours. And in some instances a morbid nervous mobility will be engendered by it, from which the unfortunate sufferer never wholly recovers, remaining liable ever afterterwards to palpitations, faintings, or nervous tremors, on the slightest alarm, and more particularly if it be of the nature of that which awakened the primary disturbance. Operating upon females, it will not unusually provoke paroxysms of hysterics, and even leave a settled disposition to them in the system.

* On Experience in Physic, vol. 2, pp. 278–9.

Catalepsy, that remarkable and rare nervous affection, in which there is an entire suspension of sensibility and voluntary motion, the limbs at the same time remaining fixed in any position, however restrained, in which they may be placed, has occasionally been produced by terror. In nervous and susceptible females, it has been most often thus excited; but it has happened even in the more hardy of our own sex, as shown in the following, and striking case, cited by Sir Alexander Crichton, either of catalepsy or ecstasy, affections very similar to each other, differing principally in the inflexible and rigid state of the muscles in the latter. "George Grokatzki, a Polish soldier, deserted from his regiment in the harvest of the year 1677. He was discovered a few days afterwards, drinking and making merry in a common alehouse. The moment he was apprehended he was so much terrified that he gave a loud shriek, and immediately was deprived of the power of speech. When brought to a court-martial, it was impossible to make him articulate a word; nay, he then became as immovable as a statue, and appeared not to be conscious of any thing which was going forward. In the prison to which he was conducted he neither ate nor drank. The officers and the priests at first threatened him, and afterwards endeavored to soothe and calm him, but all their efforts were in vain. He remained senseless and immovable. His irons were struck off, and he was taken out of the prison, but he did not move. Twenty days and nights were passed in this way, during which he took no kind of nourishment, nor had any natural evacuation; he then gradually sunk and died."

Chorea, or St. Vitus's dance, is another nervous affection which has sometimes been caused by fright. A peculiar nervous affection was brought on in Mr. John Hunter, by great anxiety of mind (and mental anxiety must be regarded but as a modification of fear). It consisted in a feeling as though he were suspended in the air, "of his body being much diminished in size, and of every motion of the head and limbs, however slight, being both very extensive, and accomplished with great rapidity."

Epilepsy has very often been induced by sudden fright, and a permanent tendency to it been left in the system. A celebrated German physician asserts, that in six out of fourteen epileptic patients under his care, in the hospital of St. Mark, at Vienna, the disease had been caused by terror. A man travelling alone by night, encountered a large dog in a narrow path, and fancying himself seized by the animal, he reached home in extreme terror, and on the following morning was attacked with a violent fit of epilepsy, of which he afterwards had many returns. "A young man, having witnessed some of the dreadful events at Paris, on the horrible tenth of August, became affected immediately with this disorder." A maid-servant of Leipsic, while endeavoring to untie some knots, got the impression that one of them was made by a sorceress, and became so terrified in consequence, that she was immediately seized with a fit of epilepsy.*

In young children, convulsions and epilepsy are brought

* Cooke on Nervous Diseases.

on with great facility under the operation of strongly and suddenly awakened fear. Tissot, referring to the foolish and dangerous practice of frightening children in sport, observes: "One half of those epilepsies which do not depend on such causes as might exist before the child's birth, are owing to this detestable custom; and it cannot be too much inculcated into children, never to frighten one another; a point which persons intrusted with their education ought to have the strictest regard to."*

Religion, when perverted from its true purpose of hope and consolation, and employed as an instrument of terror; when, instead of being gentle, peaceful, and full of love, it assumes a gloomy, austere, and threatening tone, may become productive of a train of nervous complaints of the most melancholy and even dangerous nature. Religion, in its widest signification, has been defined, "An impressive sense of the irresistible influence of one or more superior Beings over the concerns of mortals, which may become beneficial or inimical to our welfare." Now, according to the fancied character and requisitions of the Power or Powers it worships, it may be the parent of fear, cruelty, and intolerance, or of trust, charity, benevolence, and all the loftiest feelings that adorn our nature. The austere bigot who owns a God of terror and vengeance, becomes the slave of the direst passions. All who differ from his creed are to be hated as the enemies of heaven, and the outcasts of its mercy; and he may even persuade himself that to inflict upon them bodily

* Avis au Peuple, &c.

tortures is an acceptable religious duty. This spirit of gloomy fanaticism has been one of the severest scourges of our species. No human sympathy has been able to withstand its merciless power. It has set the parent against the child, and the child against the parent, and has blasted every tie of domestic affection. Even those naturally possessed of the most tender dispositions have become so hardened under the customs of religious bigotry, as to look without the least feeling of compassion on the pangs of the heretic amid the flames, and who, in their faith, was to pass immediately from his temporal into the indescribable agonies of eternal fires. "I was once," says Dr. Cogan, "passing through Moorfields with a young lady, aged about nine or ten years, born and educated in Portugal, but in the Protestant faith, and observing a large concourse of people assembled round a pile of faggots on fire, I expressed a curiosity to know the cause. She very composedly answered, 'I suppose that it is nothing more than *that they are going to burn a Jew.*' Fortunately it was no other than roasting an ox upon some joyful occasion. What rendered this singularity the more striking, was the natural mildness and compassion of the young person's disposition."*

There is, perhaps, no enthusiastic infatuation which has been more harmful, both to mind and body, than that of religion. The relentless and fearful passions awakened by a gloomy and vindictive religion, fraught with unimaginable future terrors, have been productive, alike in past and recent

* Philosophical Treatise on the Passions.

times, of the most melancholy disorders, both in the moral and physical constitution. Baron Haller speaks of superstitious piety as a very common cause of insanity, especially in those who picture to themselves the most terrible notions of a future state. The mind, especially if of a gloomy and enthusiastic cast, dwells upon these frightful ideas until conviction of their certainty becomes established. "An overstrained bigotry is, in itself, and considered in a medical point of view, a destructive irritation of the senses, which draws men away from the efficiency of mental freedom, and peculiarly favors the most injurious emotions. Sensual ebullitions, with strong convulsions of the nerves, appear sooner or later, and insanity, suicidal disgust of life, and incurable nervous disorders, are but too frequently the consequences of a perverse, and, indeed, hypocritical zeal, which has ever prevailed, as well in the assemblies of the Mænades and Corybantes of antiquity, as under the semblance of religion among the Christians and Mahomedans."*

At the field-meetings that are annually held among us I have been witness to the most frightful nervous affections, as convulsions, epilepsy, hysteria, distressing spasms, violent contortions of the body, not only in females in whom, from their more sensitive and sympathetic temperament, such affections are most readily excited, but also in the more hardy and robust of our own sex. Even spectators, such as attend for the purpose of amusement or merriment, will oftentimes be overtaken by the same nervous disorders. But such

* Hecker's Epidemics of the Middle Ages.

morbid affections are not peculiar to field-meetings; they happen among all sects of religionists, who seek to make proselytes by appealing to the fears, rather than convincing the judgment; affrighting the imagination with

> "—— damned ghosts, that doe in torments waile,
> And thousand feends, that doe them endlesse paine
> With fire and brimstone, which for ever shall remaine."

Females, and, indeed, all persons of susceptible feelings and nervous habits, may suffer serious injury from being subjected to such superstitious terrors. Not only the disorders mentioned, but chorea, and other nervous maladies, and even confirmed insanity, have been their melancholy consequence. Dr. Prichard informs us, that several instances of mental alienation, from the cause we are considering, have fallen within his own sphere of observation. "Some of these," says he, "have occurred among persons who had frequented churches or chapels where the ministers were remarable for a severe, impassioned, and almost imprecatory style of preaching, and for enforcing the terrors rather than setting forth the hopes and consolations which belong to the Christian religion."*

In the report of the New-York State Lunatic Asylum, for 1847, we find, out of 1,609 patients—being the whole number received—in 173 the disease is imputed to religious anxiety, and in 33 to Millerism, a new cause of religious insanity. It is a remark of Esquirol, in his treatise on Mental

* On Insanity, &c.

Maladies, &c., that insanity caused and maintained by religious notions is seldom cured. But we have it on the same authority, that religious fanaticism and terrors, although formerly so frequent causes of insanity in France, have now lost their influence there, and seldom produce the disorder. This, on his own account of the matter, would seem to be owing to the little religious feeling existing in France; religion, as he informs us, only coming in as a usage in the most solemn acts of life; no longer offering hope and consolation to the afflicted—its morality no longer guiding man in the difficult paths of life. Indeed he draws but a sad picture of his poor country. All sentiment is absorbed in a cold selfishness. Domestic affection, respect, love, authority, mutual dependences, have ceased to exist. Each lives but for himself, and the present. Marriage ties are only pretences, entered into by the wealthy either to gratify their pride, or as a matter of speculation, and by the common people are altogether neglected. The children are injudiciously educated; their passions are left unbridled, and licentious; and the women are in no better predicament, being carried away by an insatiable appetite for romances, the toilet, frivolities, and so on.

It is said of the Society of Friends, in England, that they are in a great measure exempt from what is termed religious insanity, which immunity has been explained on the character of their religion; it being one of peace and charity, they are but little exposed to those fanatical excitements and superstitious apprehensions which work so powerfully on the imaginations of many other Christian sects.

Instead of these mystical terrors, or following them, the religious visionary sometimes experiences a sort of ecstatic beatitude; his morbid and overheated imagination enkindles an infuriated and wasting zeal, an impassioned and consuming holy love, often leading to the wildest extravagances of language and action, and the most melancholy consequences to the nervous system. Under the sacred garb of religion, sensual feelings are, I fear, too frequently concealed. The expressions and behavior of some of these heated enthusiasts, evince to the eye of sober reason, that they are devoured by carnal rather than spiritual fires—that their glowing mystical love is lighted at the flames of earth, not heaven.

"This pretended spiritual love consumes the body more than if the patients really gave themselves up to the appetite of the senses, because the orgasm which excites it lasts continually. I have observed that many of these unhappy people have become hypochondriacal, hysterical, stupid, and even maniacal. One patient after raving with this love, and burning with an inward fire, was sometimes attacked with the most painful spasms, and sometimes with stupor, till at length she spit blood, became blind, dumb, and soon afterwards died. Some have died consumptive, others have become paralytic.

"It is inconceivable how many complaints originate in monastic life, from the religious exercises to which the different orders are subjected. The nuns seem to give into these extravagances much more easily than the men, on account of their greater delicacy and irritability. The ef-

fects of these spiritual reflections are a heaviness or dizziness of the head, paleness, weakness, palpitation of the heart, fainting fits; till at length, when the imagination is disordered to a certain degree, all discernment and judgment seem to be at an end, and these unhappy people become, in the true sense of the word, visionaries."*

Women of an imaginative temperament, and whose reflective and reasoning powers are limited, are most susceptible to fervid and fantastical religious impressions. And it is said that when their charms begin to fade, and they cease to be admired, and their worldly influence is consequently on the wane, they are then most prone to become the subjects of holy reveries; being either transported by a fervid zeal and enthusiasm, or else—overwhelmed by terror, gloom, despair—they pass into some form of insanity, generally either religious monomania or demonomania. Woman, Esquirol tells us in the work previously cited, is more nervous and imaginative, more operated upon by fear, more susceptible of religious notions, more inclined to the marvellous and more liable to melancholy than our own sex. Having reached a certain age, abandoned by the world, and passing into *ennui* and sadness, she next sinks into melancholy, often religious melancholy; and sometimes—when the mind is prepared by weakness, ignorance, and prejudice, for such a result—into demonomania, or a fancied demoniacal possession. These observations may be literally true of the women of France, but to women in general they will hardly apply without some reservation.

* Zimmermann on Experience in Physic.

That women, as has been remarked, when they grow old and cease to be admired, and worldly excitements are failing them, turn their thoughts heavenward, and seek enjoyment in religious reveries, is doubtless often true. But is it not so with us all? Seldom do we dedicate the first flowings of the cup of life, the sprightly streams of our youth, to religion. Such would be indeeed a praiseworthy offering. No! we cling to earth and its joys as long as they will serve us,—till age begins to palsy our powers, and deaden our susceptibilities, and then seek in holy aspirations for the felicity which earthly objects can no longer afford:—In the true selfishness of our nature we get all we can out of the present world, and then turn saints for the sake of what we may get in the next.

The convulsive and other morbid nervous affections, the consequence of religious terrors and fanaticism, have, in different countries, and at various periods of the world, so spread themselves through the power of sympathy or imitation, as to hold a place in history among the important epidemics that have afflicted the human species. Demonomania, which is most commonly connected with the terrors of religion, has, through a sort of moral contagion, or the principle of imitation, become at times so extended as to constitute an epidemic. It is a remark of Esquirol, that delirium usually assumes the character of the ideas prevalent at the period when the insanity breaks forth; and that demoniacal possession is therefore most frequent when religion becomes the principal topic of interest and discussion, and religious ideas therefore principally occupy the mind.

The mental alienation which affected the *Convulsionaires* of St. Medard, beginning in the year 1727, and becoming so extensive an epidemic in France, lasting for fifty-nine years, had its origin in religious superstition. The history of this sect exhibits human nature in the most ridiculous and humiliating point of view. Sometimes the convulsionists bounded from the ground like fish out of water; "and this was so frequently imitated at a later period, that the women and girls, when they expected such violent contortions, not wishing to appear indecent, put on gowns made like sacks, closed at their feet. If they received any bruises by falling down, they were healed with earth from the grave of the uncanonized saint. They usually, however, showed great agility in this respect, and it is scarcely necessary to remark that the female sex, especially, was distinguished by all kinds of leaping, and almost inconceivable contortions of body. Some spun round on their feet with incredible rapidity, as is related of the dervishers; others ran their heads against walls, or curved their bodies like rope-dancers, so that their heels touched their shoulders. Some had a board placed across their bodies, upon which a whole row of men stood; and, as in this unnatural state of mind a kind of pleasure is derived from excruciating pain, some too were seen who caused their bosoms to be pinched with tongs, while others, with gowns closed at the feet, stood upon their heads, and remained in that position longer than would have been possible had they been in health."* It is said that an advocate—Pinault—who belonged to this sect,

* Hecker's Epidemics of the Middle Ages.

barked like a dog some hours every day, and which barking propensity extended among the believers. I believe there has existed a sect of religionists called *Barkers.* Indeed, any physical acts may be extended by sympathy, under morbidly susceptible states of the nervous system. Thus we read that a nun in a large convent in France set to mewing like a cat; when, straightway, other nuns began to mew also; and at length all the nuns mewed together for several hours at stated times every day, vexing and astonishing the whole Christian neighborhood by their daily cat-concert. This propensity might have extended itself and become epidemic, and a new sect under the name of Mewers sprung up, had not the nuns been apprised that a company of soldiers, provided with rods, had been placed at the entrance of the convent, with directions to whip them till they promised to mew no more, which ended the farce.

Another convent-epidemic, described by Cardan, took place in Germany, in the fifteenth century, surpassing even the caterwauling one in France. "A nun in a German nunnery fell to biting all her companions. In the course of a short time all the nuns of this convent began biting each other. The news of this infatuation among the nuns soon spread, and it now passed from convent to convent throughout a great part of Germany, principally Saxony and Bradenburg. It afterwards visited the nunneries of Holland, and at last the nuns had the biting mania even as far as Rome."*

* Cited in Hecker's Epidemics, by the translator, B. G. Babington, M. D., &c.

Laycock, in his Essay on Hysteria, has cited from Wesley's Journal a very curious example of the propagation of physical actions through the power of sympathy, or imitation.

"Friday, 9th [May, 1740]. I was a little surprised at some who were buffeted of Satan in an unusual manner, by such a spirit of laughter as they could in no wise resist, though it was pain and grief unto them. I could scarcely have believed the account they gave me, had I not known the same thing ten or eleven years ago. Part of Sunday, my brother and I then used to spend in walking in the meadows and singing psalms. But one day, just as we were beginning to sing, he burst out into loud laughter. I asked him if he was distracted, and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves to pieces, but we were forced to go home without singing another line."

"Wednesday 21, in the evening, such a spirit of laughter was among us, that many were much offended. But the attention of all was soon fixed on L. S., whom we all knew to be no dissembler. Sometimes she laughed till almost strangled, then broke out into cursing and blaspheming; then stamped and struggled with incredible strength, so that four or five could scarce hold her. Most of our brothers and sisters were now fully convinced that those who were under this strange temptation could not help it. Only Elizabeth B. and Anne H. were of another mind, being still sure any one might help laughing if she would. This they declared

to many on Thursday, but on Friday, 23d, both of them were suddenly seized in the same manner as the rest, and laughed whether they would or not, almost without ceasing. Thus they continued for two days a spectacle to all, and were then, upon prayer made for them, delivered in a moment."

If we recur to the history of the dancing plagues of the middle ages, the dance of St. John or St. Vitus, which, following close upon the ravages of the black death, spread "like a demoniacal epidemic over the whole of Germany and the neighboring countries to the north-west," and tarantism which swept equally over Italy, and fancied to arise from the bite of the tarantula, a ground spider common in Apulia, where the disease first made its appearance, we shall find abundant illustration of the wonderful influence of sympathy in promoting the extension of nervous and imitative disorders.

Epidemic convulsive affections, most often excited by religious fanaticism, have prevailed much in Scotland, especially in its more northern portions. In the United States of America, they have again and again burst forth under the influence of a morbid religious enthusiasm, and spread with astonishing rapidity through whole communities, and into different States. Some of the Western States, particularly in their early settlement, have been most extensively and severely affected in this manner. The following account of a singular nervous affection which has occasionally appeared in certain portions of our western country, called the *jerks*, and which may not be without interest to my readers, is

copied from the Ohio Historical Collections into the New York Journal of Medicine, &c., vol. x. p. 372, whence I quote it.

"In 1803, Austinburg, Morgan and Harpersfield experienced a revival of religion, by which about thirty-five from those places united with the church at Austinburg. This revival was attended with the phenomena of '*bodily exercises*,' then common in the West. They have been classified by a clerical writer, as, 1st, the *falling exercise*; 2d, the *jerking exercise;* 3d, the *rolling exercise;* 4th, the *running exercise;* 5th, the *dancing exercise;* 6th, the *barking exercise;* 7th, the *visions and trances.*" The account which follows is that of the jerking exercise, which, it is thought, sufficiently characterizes the remainder.

"It was familiarly called the *jerks*, and the first recorded instance of its occurrence was in East Tennessee, where several hundred of both sexes were seized with this strange and involuntary contortion. The subject was instantaneously seized with spasms or convulsions in every muscle, nerve, and tendon. His head was thrown or jerked from side to side with such rapidity that it was impossible to distinguish his visage, and the most lively fears were awakened lest he should dislocate his neck, or dash out his brains. His body partook of the same impulse, and was hurried on by like jerks over every obstacle, fallen trunks of trees, or, in church, over pews and benches, apparently to the most imminent danger of being bruised or mangled. It was useless to attempt to hold or restrain him, and the paroxysm was permitted gradually to exhaust itself. An additional motive

for leaving him to himself was the superstitious notion that all attempt at restraint was resisting the Spirit of God.

"The first form in which these spasmodic contortions made their appearance, was that of a simple jerking of the arms from the elbows downwards. The jerk was very quick and sudden, and followed with short intervals. This was the simplest and most common form, but the convulsive motion was not confined to the arms, it extended in many instances to other parts of the body. When the joint of the neck was affected, the head was thrown backward and forward with a celerity frightful to behold, and which was impossible to be imitated by persons who were not under the same stimulus. The bosom heaved, the countenance was disgustingly distorted, and the spectators were alarmed lest the neck should be broken. When the hair was long, it was shaken with such quickness, backward and forward, as to crack and snap like the lash of a whip. Sometimes the muscles of the back were affected, and the patient was thrown down on the ground, when his contortions for some time resembled those of a live fish, cast from its native element on the land."

The following description is given by an eye-witness, and likewise an apologist, and is probably therefore an accurate one. "Nothing in nature could better represent this strange and unaccountable operation, than for one to goad another, alternately on every side, with a piece of red-hot iron. The exercise commonly began in the head, which would fly backward and forward, and from side to side, with a quick jolt, which the person would naturally labor to sup-

press, but in vain; and the more any one labored to stay himself and be sober, the more he staggered and the more his twitches increased. He must necessarily go as he was inclined, whether with a violent dash on the ground, and bounce from place to place like a football, or hop round with head, limbs, or trunk twitching and jolting in every direction, as if they must inevitably fly asunder. And how such could escape without injury was no small wonder among spectators. By this strange operation the human form was commonly so transformed and disfigured, as to lose every trace of its natural appearance. Sometimes the head would be twitched right and left, to a half round, with such velocity, and in the quick progressive jerk, it would seem as if the person was transmuted into some other species of creatures. Head-dresses were of but little account among the female jerkers. Even handkerchiefs bound tight round the head would be flirted off almost with the first twitch, and the hair put in the utmost confusion: this was a very great inconvenience, to redress which the generality were shorn, though directly contrary to their confession of faith. Such as were seized with the jerks, were wrested at once, not only from under their own government, but that of every one else, so that it was dangerous to attempt confining them or touching them in any manner, to whatever danger they were exposed; yet few were hurt, except it were such as rebelled against the operation, through wilful and deliberate enmity, and refused to comply with the injunctions which it came to enforce.

From the universal testimony of those who have de-

scribed these spasms, they appear to have been wholly involuntary. This remark is applicable also to all the other bodily exercises. What demonstrates satisfactorily their involuntary nature is, not only that, as above stated, the twitches prevail in spite of resistance, and even more for attempts to suppress them; but that wicked men would be seized with them while sedulously guarding against an attack, and cursing every jerk when made. Travellers on their journey, and laborers at their daily work, were also liable to them."

Religion, it will be seen from the foregoing observations, when fraught with the terrors of a gloomy fanaticism, or employed as an agent to stir up a false zeal, and morbid emotions in the minds of the weak, ignorant, and susceptible, may be productive of the worst evils both to the mental and bodily constitution. But it is far otherwise with true and rational religion; a religion grounded on a firm belief in a supreme and benevolent Power, who has contrived, and who directs all things by the laws of wisdom and goodness, and to whose will we can confidently resign our present and future destiny. Such a religion serves to temper the feelings, secure us against an overstrained enthusiasm, and morbid nervous excitement; to render us better and happier in life, and to console and sustain us in the hour of death.

Fright, no matter from what source, will be found, on recurring to the reports both of our own and foreign lunatic asylums, to hold a prominent place among the causes of mental alienation. Mania, or raving madness, most com-

monly follows this cause, though in some instances dementia, or an incoherence in, or a stagnation, as it were, of all the mental powers, has been the mournful and irremediable consequence.

The statement is made by an eminent French writer on insanity, that many facts have come within his information showing that a strong predisposition to madness in the offspring, has arisen from fright experienced by the mother during pregnancy; striking cases of which nature are said to have happened during the period of the French revolution. That strong impressions acting upon the mind of the mother during gestation, and more especially from terror, may, in some manner, and under some circumstances, influence the physical condition of her offspring, at such time a part of herself, and directly dependent upon her vital actions for its nutrition and life, will, I think, scarce be disputed by any one who has cautiously and candidly considered the subject. Dr. Andrew Combe, in his treatise on the Management of Infancy, has cited from Baron Percy the following account of what occurred in this relation after the siege of Landau, in 1793. In addition to a violent cannonading, which kept the women for some time in a continued state of alarm, the arsenal blew up with a frightful explosion, striking almost every one with terror. Out of ninety-two children born in that district within a few months, sixteen perished at the moment of birth; thirty-three lingered for eight or ten months, and then died; eight were idiotic, and died before they were five years of age; and two were born with numerous fractures of the

bones of the limbs, ascribed to the cannonading and explosion. That the popular notion that marks upon and deformities of the infant are ascribable to sudden and strong emotions in the mother, is unfounded, is the general though not unexceptionable belief of modern physiologists. That a strong and persisting impression on the mind of the mother at a certain period, and under peculiar conditions of gestation, may not only be adequate to affect the mental constitution, but, occasionally, even to produce marked bodily deformity in the offspring, I should be unwilling, in opposition to so many recorded and authoritative facts, unreservedly to deny. I will ask the liberty of relating a single striking example of an apparent influence of the imagination of the mother upon her offspring.

A number of years ago, while on a visit at Washington, I was invited by the late Dr. Sewall, Professor in the Medical College of that city, to visit a child having a remarkable congenital deformity, the probable consequence of the mother's imagination. Mrs. ——, a woman of strong sensibilities, when three months advanced in pregnancy, experienced a severe shock to her feelings, from seeing the right hand of one of her young children, a daughter, receive an injury by being caught in the wheel of a hand-wagon, with which she was playing. The hand, slightly lacerated and bloody, appeared to the excited fancy of the mother as though all the fingers had been torn off, and she, consequently, became exceedingly alarmed, and there followed the settled impression that her child would be born with a deformed hand. This belief she expressed to her physician, Dr.

Sewall at the time, and repeatedly afterwards, and could not be persuaded out of it. At her proper time she was delivered of a boy, and the first question to her accoucheur was, "Are the hands perfect?" but, to the astonishment of Dr. S., in the place of the right hand, a mere stump, with two small knobs of flesh arising from it, was only to be seen. I examined this deformity with care, and it appeared as though not only the hand, but even the bones of the wrist were wanting. The above circumstances were first related to me by the woman, and verified by her highly respectable attending physician. It was the right hand, let it be remembered, the one corresponding to that injured in the other child, which was deficient. The mental impression was here early produced, and lasted, with a fixed persuasion that the child would be affected with a particular deformity, through the whole period of gestation, circumstances shown by the cases which have been reported in recent years in different medical periodicals, to be favorable to the above-mentioned result. I am not prepared to affirm, that the event in the case related was any thing more than a mere coincidence, and should so set it down, were it not supported by numerous other and well-attested instances of a like nature.

Palsies, partial or general, have immediately followed the powerful action of fear. The dumbness which has occasionally succeded its operation may doubtless have sometimes depended on a paralysis in the organs of speech. Permanent disease of the heart has also been known as the induced effect of this same passion.

There are many instances recorded where, through the influence of great terror, the hair has become quickly changed, in a single night, or even in a few hours, to a gray or white—where the head of youth has almost immediately become blanched as in old age. Dr. Pettigrew has cited the following case, among others equally wonderful, "of a noble Spaniard, Don Diego Osorio, who being in love with a young lady of the court, had prevailed with her for a private conference, within the gardens of the king; but by the barking of a little dog their privacy was betrayed—the young gentleman seized by the king's guard, and imprisoned. It was capital to be found in that place, and therefore he was condemned to die. He was so terrified at hearing this sentence, that one and the same night saw the same person young and old; being turned gray, as in those stricken in years. The jailer, moved at the sight, related the accident to King Ferdinand, as a prodigy, who thereupon pardoned him, saying, he had been sufficiently punished for his fault." M. Rostan, in a French Journal of Medicine, relates of a female imprisoned during the French revolution, and threatened with execution, that her skin, in consequence, underwent a permanent change to the hue of the less dark negro.

Acute fear influences, often very strikingly, the different secretions, but perhaps none more remarkably than that of the milk. Sometimes it lessens, again, when the fear is sudden and great, it entirely arrests it. Cows, when under the influence of this emotion, yield their milk with difficulty; and the observation is a familiar one in the country, that

some of these animals, and which is doubtless explainable on the action of fear, will not "give down" their milk to strange milkers. The operation of terror is capable also of so vitiating this secretion as to render it not only prejudicial, but actually poisonous to the child who draws it. Dr. Carpenter cites the following instance as one of the most remarkable on record, of the effect of strong mental excitement on the Mammary secretion. "A carpenter fell into a quarrel with a soldier billeted in his house, and was set upon by the latter with his drawn sword. The wife of the carpenter at first trembled from fear and terror, then suddenly threw herself furiously between the two combatants, wrested the sword from the soldier's hand, broke it in pieces, and threw it away. During the tumult some neighbors came in and separated the men. While in this state of strong excitement, the mother took up her child from the cradle where it lay playing, and in the most perfect health, never having had a moment's illness; she gave it the breast, and in so doing sealed its fate. In a few minutes the infant left off sucking, became restless, panted, and sank dead upon its mother's bosom. The physician, who was instantly called in, found the child lying in the cradle as if asleep, and with its features undisturbed; but all his resources were fruitless. It was irrecoverably gone."*

We have cases recorded of bloody sweat supervening upon fright. Dr. Millingen, in his Curiosities of Medical Experience, cites the following case of a widow forty-five years

* Human Physiology.

of age, who had lost her only son. "She one day fancied that she beheld his apparition, besecching her to relieve him from purgatory by her prayers, and by fasting every Friday. The following Friday, in the month of August, a perspiration tinged with blood broke out. For five successive Fridays the same phenomenon appeared, when a confirmed diapedesis (transudation of blood) appeared. The blood escaped from the upper part of the body, the back of the head, the temples, the eyes, nose, the breast, and the tips of the fingers. The disorder disappeared spontaneously on Friday the 8th of March of the following year. This affection was evidently occasioned by superstitious fears; and this appears the more probable from the periodicity of the attacks. The first invasion of the disease might have been purely accidental; but the regularity of its subsequent appearance on the stated day of the vision, may be attributed to the influence of apprehension. Bartholinus mentions cases of bloody sweat taking place during vehement terror and the agonies of torture."

The terrors with which some persons are so often, or almost habitually agitated during their nightly slumbers, can hardly be otherwise than detrimental to the health of the body. A frightful dream will sometimes impair the appetite, and leave the individual pale, melancholy, and with his nervous system in a state of morbid commotion through the whole of the subsequent day. After a night passed amid the agony of fancy-framed terrors, it is not to be expected that the nerves should suddenly regain their composure, that the moral tranquillity should be at once restored.

The different mental feelings, liberated during sleep from the control of the judgment, are in many instances highly extravagant, and altogether out of proportion to the causes exciting them. Hence, in dreams, our fears are often aggravated and distressing, and some persons are in the habit of starting suddenly from their repose, in the greatest dismay, uttering deep and direful cries, their bodies perhaps bathed in sweat, and remaining even for a considerable time after they are fully awake, under the painful impression of the fancy which affrighted them. Even convulsions and epilepsy have been the unhappy consequence of such imaginary terrors. Tissot relates an instance of a robust man, who, on dreaming that he was pursued by a bull, awoke in a state of great agitation and delirium, and, in not many minutes after, fell down in a severe fit of epilepsy.

In childhood, the impression of dreams being particularly strong, so that they are sometimes ever afterwards remembered as realities, and fear being then a very active principle, more injury is liable to accrue from their imaginary terrors than at later periods of life. Some children are apt to rouse suddenly from their sleep, screaming, crying, perhaps springing up on end, or out of bed, in a wild delirium of fright, and it may be a good while before their fears can be quieted, and their minds composed to rest. Those convulsions, too, with which children are occasionally seized at night, may not unfrequently proceed from the same visionary terrors.

If the fears of children, from any particular cause, have

been strongly excited while awake, they will sometimes be renewed, even in a more intense degree, perhaps for several successive nights, during their slumbers, thus multiplying the fearful impressions, and thereby the danger.

CHAPTER XIX.

FEAR CONTINUED.—IN ITS MORE CHRONIC OPERATION IT BECOMES THE OCCASION OF VARIOUS PREJUDICIAL EFFECTS IN THE ANIMAL ECONOMY.—SUPERSTITIOUS FEARS IN REGARD TO DEATH ARE IN MANY PERSONS A CAUSE OF MUCH SUFFERING BOTH TO BODY AND MIND.—THE MANNER IN WHICH THIS EVENT SHOULD BE REGARDED.—DANGER OF INDULGING THE FANCY OF CHILDREN IN TALES OF SUPERNATURAL TERRORS.—FORTITUDE OPERATES AS A WHOLESOME STIMULUS BOTH TO MIND AND BODY.

HAVING learnt how serious are the consequences oftentimes arising from acute fear, we rationally infer that even its more chronic action may be attended with important injury to health.

A bold, intrepid spirit may justly be ranked among the conditions which secure to the constitution its full measure of physical power. Few causes will more certainly impair the vigor of the nerves, break down the manliness of the body, and degrade the energies of the mind, than the habitual indulgence in imaginary fears.

The depressing agency of fear is well known to augment

the susceptibility of the constitution to disease; and especially to the action of contagion, and epidemic influences. It was observed by an old and distinguished medical writer (Willis), that they who have the greatest fear of small-pox, are generally the first to be attacked by it. Hecker, in his history of the Black Death, a malignant and wide-spreading epidemic of the fourteenth century, says that many fell victims to fear, on the first appearance of the distemper. And Dr. Caius, in his account of the Sweating Sickness, another fatal and extensive epidemic which appeared in England in 1485, advises, among other means of escaping the disease, to set apart all affections, as fretting cares and thoughts, doleful or sorrowful imaginations, vain fears, foolish loves, gnawing hates, and to live quietly, friendly, and merrily one with another, to avoid malice and dissension, and every one to mind his own business. The cholera is well known during its epidemic prevalence to have been often induced in timid people through their strong apprehensions of it.

Tarantism, to which I have before alluded, was doubtless often the effect of imaginary fears of having been bitten by the tarantula. Thus the bite from any unseen insect would not unfrequently bring on all the symptoms of this peculiar affection. "The persuasion," says Hecker, "of the inevitable consequences of being bitten by the tarantula, exercised a dominion over men's minds which even the healthiest and strongest could not shake off. . . . Wherever we turn, we find that this morbid state of mind prevailed, and was so supported by the opinions of the age, that it needed only a stimulus in the bite of the tarantula, and the supposed cer-

tainty of its very disastrous consequences, to originate this violent nervous disorder."

Many cases may be found recorded where symptoms of hydrophobia have arisen from the mere apprehension of having been bitten by a rabid animal. The hypochondriac fancies and fears himself the subject of particular diseases, and straightway he begins to feel all their symptoms. Some medical students, of sensitive and nervous temperaments, not only imagine that they have the diseases of which they are studying, but will sometimes actually present more or less of their symptoms.

If the sick yield themselves to the impulse of fear, their chances of recovery will generally become lessened; its depressing influence serving to reduce the reacting or restorative powers of the vital economy. It has been remarked, that the small-pox is particularly apt to prove unfavorable in the young and beautiful, who naturally dread a disease so fatal to beauty. A strong will may do much for us in disease, as well as in health. The timid and dispirited, other circumstances being the same, run down the soonest under disease. I have seen those who appeared to me to continue valetudinarians from mere pusillanimity, from lack of energy or moral courage to be well; a certain force of character being a needful stimulus to the physical, as it is to the mental actions.

Undue anxiety, and superstitious apprehensions in regard to death, which so prey upon the minds of some people, may operate to the serious injury of both the physical and moral health and tranquillity. It is, as I conceive, the sol-

emn trappings, ceremonials, and fancied horrors that are so generally associated, even in our earliest education, with the dissolution of the body, and the gloomy and fearful imaginings of what is to come after, which cause the feelings to revolt from its idea with such dismal forebodings. That we have an instinctive dread of pain will scarce be disputed; but whether we have naturally, or independent of education and association, the same feeling in respect to death, will, at least, admit of question. Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver, "to take away all superstition, ordered the dead to be buried in the city, and even permitted their monuments to be erected near the temples; accustoming the youth to such sights from their infancy, that they might have no uneasiness from them, nor any horror for death, as if people were polluted with the touch of a dead body, or with treading upon a grave."* And we read in Herodotus, that to keep the mind familiar with the thoughts of death, the ancient Egyptians, at their entertainments, had a small coffin, containing a perfect representation of a dead body, carried round and presented to the different guests in rotation, the bearer exclaiming—"Cast your eyes on this figure; after death you yourself will resemble it: drink, then, and be happy."

Death being the grand goal of life, and that toward which we are all steadily moving, if its image affrights us, it must, as it is ever in view,—for struggle as we will we cannot shut it out,—be a source of continual and unmitigated

* Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus.

torment; a bugbear disquieting our whole existence, and cutting us off even from the little happiness which life might otherwise afford. We should strive then, so far as in us lies, to look on death with a composed and philosophical spirit,—as one of the great and necessary laws of our vital organization,—as the last function, the inevitable consummation of our present being; not permitting its gloomy shadow to hide the few flowers, and darken the little sunshine of existence. It is well known that the mind may, by a proper discipline, be brought to view this final event of our nature without the smallest emotion either of terror or regret; and there have been those who, even in the midst of a prosperous fortune, have experienced a pleasing satisfaction in its contemplation; have looked forward to it as the desirable and peaceful repose to the anxious and weary race of life.

> "Sleepe after toile, port after stormie seas,
> Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please."*

It is the part of true philosophy to get from existence all we can; to participate, so far as fortune permits, in all its rational and innocent pleasures,—the enjoyments of mind, the sweets of virtue,—and yet be willing at any moment to part with it. Such was the philosophy of Epicurus, and of other of the wisest and best among the ancients, and which soothed their lives and carried many of them calmly

* Spenser's Faery Queen.

through the most painful deaths. The human mind can scarce reach a state of easy quietude until it has learned to contemplate the image of death with composure.

It often happens, paradoxical as it would seem, that those whose existence has been the most barren of enjoyment, who have tasted little beside the bitterness of life, are the most anxious to live, the most apprehensive of death. Buoyed up by the anticipation of change, by the hope that their turn may yet come, and magnifying the value of joys they have never tried, they will still cling with an unrelaxing grasp to the very shreds of a tattered existence. Like the traveller at his inn, they are unwilling to go to rest till they have had their meal. And on the other hand, they who have been blest with prosperity, who have feasted bountifully at life's table, satisfied that they have had their turn, satiated with pleasures whose worthlessness they have discovered, are frequently the most ready to take their departure.

It is of the utmost importance, both to the physical and moral welfare, that the mind be secured by a proper education against the influence of all supernatural and idle sources of terror,—of yawning church-yards, and their pale inhabitants, of

> ———"damned spirits all,
> That in cross-ways and floods have burial."

The ignorant, and those whose education has been erroneous, and who in early life have been subjected to impro-

per associations, often experience the most aggravated sufferings from fears of such nature, and even death has at times been their consequence. No human courage is proof against the terrors of superstition. The hero who braves death in the battle-field, may yet tremble at the croaking of the raven, or the screech of the night owl.

We can now easily imagine the exceeding hazard of indulging the fancies of children with idle tales of apparitions, haunted houses, witches, &c., which always afford them such intense and exciting interest. Ghost-stories, above all the absurd creations of superstition, would seem to carry most terror to the youthful mind. The idea of the reappearance of the dead—of the pale, sheeted, stalking ghost of a departed mortal—is ever associated with the most awful gloom, and agitating fear.

Whether all stories founded on supernatural events should be denied to childhood, is a question I shall not here enter upon; but that all such as serve to engender imaginary fears ought to be interdicted, few, it is presumed, will feel inclined to dispute.

All children, but in a more particular manner those of a delicate and timid nature, are liable to sustain no little suffering of body and mind, when their feelings are frequently wrought upon by fictitious terrors. As night approaches, all their superstitious apprehensions increase, and should they chance to be left alone for ever so short a period, their situation becomes pitiable in the extreme. And then on retiring to rest, appalled by the darkness and silence, and dreading lest their eyes should encounter some frightful

spectre, they bury themselves beneath the bed-clothes, and thus lie reeking, perhaps, with sweat, and nearly suffocated from the heat and confinement of the air. Nor even here do they escape from their fearful imaginings. Uncouth phantoms keep rising before their vision, and every little noise, though of the most familiar character, as the gnawing of a rat, the jarring of a door or window, or even the moaning of the wind, is magnified or transformed by the dismayed fancy into some alarming supernatural sound. On their falling asleep these waking fantasies may still be continued in the manner of dreams, creating a yet higher degree of terror, causing them, often, to start abruptly from their slumbers, screaming and wild with affright. In the morning, as would be imagined after a night of such painful agitation, they awake gloomy, languid, and unrefreshed.

Under the continued disturbance of such shadowy fears, the health, certainly if it be not naturally robust, will soon begin to decline. The body grows pale, and emaciates, the appetite diminishes, the stomach and bowels get disordered, and so enfeebled, and so morbidly sensitive may the system at length become, that the least noise, if sudden, or the unexpected presence of a person, or any object, will cause violent palpitations, difficulty of speaking, nervous tremors and agitations, and at times even fainting; and sometimes the nervous system never entirely recovers from the morbid condition into which it has been thus brought.

So deep seated do these fearful associations, engendered in the weakness of childhood, many times become, that darkness and stillness will renew them long after the reason is ma-

tured, and their absurdity apparent; and so may they remain a permanent source of injury to the mental tranquillity, and by necessary consequence to the physical health. The superstitious weakness of Doctor Johnson,—and it may be, also, that dread of death which so continually haunted him, weighing like a nightmare on his moral energies, and imbittering his existence,—were, in all likelihood, the result of injudicious associations awakened in the education of his early years. We read in Plutarch that the Spartan nurses used the children "to any sort of meat, to have no terrors in the dark, nor to be afraid of being alone, and to leave all ill-humor and unmanly crying."*

Sporting with the timidity of children, as startling them with sudden and uncommon noises or sights, which appears to afford so much amusement to some inconsiderate people, cannot be too severely censured. And equally censurable is the practice of playing upon their natural fears as a mode of punishment, or to enforce their obedience, as shutting them up in the dark, threatening them with some of the many nursery spectres which have been created to help inefficient parents in subduing their misgoverned and therefore refractory offspring. The most melancholy consequences, as convulsions, deafness, idiocy, and even death, have sometimes happened to children from such culpable practices. Some mothers, to still their children to sleep, are in the habit of indiscreetly threatening them with Rawhead and Bloody-Bones, or other frightful spectres, thus oftentimes

* Life of Lycurgus.

inducing on their tender and naturally timid minds an impression, deep, lasting, and harmful. If a mother cannot quiet her child to rest in a more innocent way than by working upon its fears, she had better content herself to bear its noise till sleep comes of itself, which it always will do in proper time to the young, healthful, and crimeless. Objections equally forcible may be urged against terrifying and confounding the mind while yet unconfirmed, with the awful mysteries and punishments of religion; subjects which always perplex, and often disorder even the ripest intellects.

Why is it, it may be asked, that so large a proportion of young children, even at the present period of boasted light and philosophy, are afraid to be left a moment by themselves in the dark; are so loth to go to bed, or about the house alone after nightfall, although well assured that there are no earthly dangers to hurt them, but that their fancies have been unwisely wrought upon through the idle tales of superstition?

Children, I am convinced, suffer far more from the influence under notice than most persons are prone to suspect; since ashamed to be thought cowards—and at what period of life are we not?—they will studiously conceal the fears which are preying on their health, and crushing all their moral energies. Hence, bodily infirmities in them, excited and maintained by fear, may often be imputed to a physical origin, and they, in consequence, be made the subjects of medicinal treatment, which weakening yet further the powers of the constitution, and thereby adding to the

nervous susceptibility, serves but to aggravate the effect of the secret cause.

We can now unerstand how important it is, both as regards their moral and physical well-being, to keep the young as much as possible from the society of ignorant and superstitious domestics, who are always ready to administer to their eager cravings for supernatural marvels. Parents, to escape the noise and trouble of their children, are too prompt to submit them to the care of servants, so that many really receive a much larger share of their primary education in the kitchen than in the parlor. That such should be the case is certainly to be regretted, it belonging to our imitative nature readily to acquire the habits, manners, and modes of thinking and speaking of those with whom we habitually associate. And more especially is this true in early life, when the mind and body are unfolding themselves, and the brain, soft and delicate, receives with the greatest facility every new impression. Boerhaave relates that a schoolmaster near Leyden being squint-eyed, it was found that the children placed under his care soon exhibited a like obliquity of vision. It has been well observed, that there is a necessity for us either to imitate others, or to hate them.

Fearlessness and self-reliance, let me add, in conclusion of the present chapter, operate at all periods of life as a healthful stimulus alike to mind and body; wherefore such feelings ought ever, and in a more particular manner when the moral and physical functions are undergoing development, to be assiduously nurtured. To such salutary feel-

ings, moreover, good conduct is always most propitious. The opposite being essentially blended with fear and distrust, must, therefore, however it may serve us in respect to mere external goods, be incompatible with the true interests both of our mental and bodily constitution.

CHAPTER XX.

FEAR CONCLUDED.—THAT PECULIAR MODIFICATION OF FEAR TERMED HORROR, SUMMARILY EXAMINED.

THAT singular mental feeling which we express by the word horror, consists in a deep and painful detestation, almost always more or less mingled with fear, of particular and, commonly, familiar objects. This, I am aware, is not the only sense in which the term is used, but it is the one to which I shall especially restrict it in the present chapter; and, taking its original Latin meaning (a shivering or quaking, as from fear, or the cold fit of an ague), none certainly could better indicate the physical phenomena of this afflictive moral feeling.

The manifestations of horror, as exhibited in the physical organization, are mostly the same as those presented in simple fear—as sudden paleness, coldness, and contraction of the skin, with the consequent elevation of the hairs; also chills and rigors, or general tremors of the body, with panting, and oppression of the heart and lungs; and, when immoderate, it will give rise to the like train of melancholy

phenomena, which have been already enumerated as the characteristics of exceeding terror; such as fainting, convulsions, epilepsy, palsies, and even instant death.

Horror is distinguishable from ordinary fear, inasmuch as it may be excited, and even in an aggravated degree, by the presence of objects which neither threaten, nor, in fact, cause the slightest apprehension of bodily injury. A reptile, or insect, for example, known to be entirely harmless, may beget such a sense of abhorrence as to bring on fainting or convulsions, even in those who would resolutely encounter the most ferocious animal. The fear, then, mingled in the feeling of horror does not necessarily depend on any real danger apprehended from its object, but upon the suffering which its presence occasions in the nervous system.

Very many people are known to suffer, and oftentimes during their whole lives, under a horror, or as it is more usually termed, an antipathy, toward particular animals or things, and which are often in themselves harmless, and to the generality of persons wholly innocuous. Those of a nervous or sensitive temperament are more especially apt to suffer from antipathies. Indeed there are few of such to whom does not belong some object of horror.

> "Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
> Some, that are mad, if they behold a cat."

Germanicus could neither endure the sight nor the crowing of a cock. "I have seen persons," says Montaigne,

"that have run faster from the smell of apples than from gun-shot; others that have been frightened at a mouse; others that have vomited at the sight of cream, and some that have done the like at the making of a featherbed."* Broussais says he once knew a Prussian officer who could see neither an old woman, a cat, nor a thimble, without experiencing convulsive agitations; without jumping and screaming, and making unnatural grimaces. Toward honey, cheese, musk, strawberries, and other common, and even generally agreeable articles, I have known such strong antipathies to exist, that the most disagreeable and painful effects would be produced by exposure to their slightest influence. Dr. Whytt tells us that "several delicate women, who could easily bear the stronger smell of tobacco, have been thrown into fits by musk, ambergrease, or a pale rose, which, to most people, are either grateful, or at least not disagreeable." Also that the smell of cheese has in some persons almost always caused a bleeding of the nose. That tansy, cinnamon, celery, even when brought near certain individuals, has caused in them fainting, and general uneasiness. And that such was the antipathy to honey in a lady mentioned by Mr. Boyle, that a little of it put into a poultice, without her knowledge, and applied to a slight wound, threw her into great disorder, which lasted till the application was removed.†

Toads, crabs, eels, snakes, and spiders, are very common objects of horror. I once knew a strong, healthy man, who

* Essays. † Observations, &c.

would turn pale and be thrown into extreme nervous agitation by the sight of an eel. And I have seen the most distressing effect produced upon the nervous system by the presence of a spider. "Happening," says Dr. Zimmermann, "to be in company with some English gentlemen, all of them men of distinction, the conversation fell upon antipathies. Many of the company denied their reality, and considered them as idle stories, but I assured them that they were truly a disease. Mr. William Matthews, son to the governor of Barbadoes, was of my opinion, because he himself had an antipathy to spiders. The rest of the company laughed at him. I undertook to prove to them that this antipathy was really an impression on his soul resulting from the determination of a mechanical effect. Lord John Murray undertook to shape some black wax into the appearance of a spider, with a view to observe whether the antipathy would take place, at the simple figure of the insect. He then withdrew for a moment, and came in again with the wax in his hand, which he kept shut. Mr. Matthews, who in other respects was a very amiable and moderate man, immediately conceiving that his friend really had a spider in his hand, clapped his hand to his sword with extreme fury, and running back towards the partition cried out most horribly. All the muscles of his face were swelled, his eyes were rolling in their sockets, and his body was immovable. We were all exceedingly alarmed, and immediately ran to his assistance, took his sword from him, and assured him that what he had conceived to be a spider was nothing more than a bit of wax, which he might see upon the table.

"He remained for some time in this spasmodic state, but at length he began gradually to recover, and to deplore the horrible passion, from which he still suffered. His pulse was very strong and quick, and his whole body was covered with a cold sweat; after taking an anodyne draught he resumed his usual tranquillity."*

There are individuals who experience an indefinable anxiety and distress, sometimes attended with faintness and sweating, from the presence, or vicinity of a cat, and even when undescried by either of the acknowledged senses. We must here suppose the nervous system, or a portion of it, from some unknown modification, to be morbidly sensitive to the subtile effluvia arising from the body of the animal.

Strong antipathies in regard to particular colors are of not uncommon occurrence. Dr. Parry tells us that a lady whom he knew could not bear to look at any thing of a scarlet color; and that another could endure the sight of no light color whatever; on which account the papers and wainscot of her rooms were all tinged with a deep blue or green; and the light was modified by green blinds. "If also at any time," says he, "I visited her in white stockings, I was always at my entrance presented with a black silk apron, with which I was requested to cover these offensive garments."† Dr. Elliotson relates of a patient, that being put in a room with red curtains, she was in consequence rendered so thirsty, that she drank seven quarts in one day.

* On Experience in Physic.

† Cases of Tetanus, &c., by Dr. Parry, of Bath.

Certain animals seem to be disturbed, and sometimes even rendered furious by red or scarlet; as bulls, and turkey-cocks; and I have known cows who would always run at a female with a red shawl. Horses, too, have, in occasional instances, been affected in a like manner by the same color.

Such antipathies may be innate, that is, dependent upon some original and mysterious condition of the animal organization, expressed by the term idiosyncracy, or may owe their existence to a painful association with the particular object of abhorrence which had been awakened in early life. In the former case, being connected with those intimate laws of our constitution, which are yet, and perhaps will ever remain, unveiled to human knowledge; all attempts to trace them to their primary and essential source will necessarily prove futile. That antipathies, or the peculiar character of organism disposing to them, may sometimes be inherited, can hardly be questioned. The most singular tastes are sometimes inherited, and why may not the same be true of distastes or aversions? The fondness for ardent spirits is doubtless many times derived from parents; and it is recorded in one of the older histories of Scotland, that a Scotch girl retained a decided taste for human flesh, for the crime of eating which her father and mother had been burnt when she was but a year old. I know an individual suffering under a deep antipathy to a spider, which antipathy is traceable to his great-grandfather, on his mother's side; that is, has existed in four successive generations.

It is a popular notion that antipathies often arise from fright or injury experienced by the mother when pregnant,

from the particular object of horror. In support of such notion, the singular case of James the First, of England, has been cited. This monarch, though all his family were distinguished for their bravery, was constitutionally timid, even to a most ludicrous extent, and could never look upon a naked sword without shrinking; and "turned away his head even from that very pacific weapon which he was obliged to draw for the purpose of bestowing the *accolade* on a knight dubbed with unhacked rapier, from carpet-consideration."* Now, it is well known to the readers of history, that David Rizzio was stabbed at the feet of Queen Mary, two months previous to the birth of James.

Dr. Copland relates, that a man-servant in his family, advanced in life, "had so great an antipathy to the sight of a mouse, that he would fly as fast as he was able from the place where one was seen, and become quite frantic at the sight. He stated that his mother, who likewise had an antipathy to mice, had been distressed by one thrown upon her when pregnant of him." † Like instances will doubtless recur to the minds of many of my readers, for they are of familiar occurrence. But even in cases of this description, the origin of the antipathy can, for the most part, be explained quite as plausibly on the principle of association. Thus James, from his earliest childhood, must doubtless have often heard the recital of all the frightful circumstances connected with Rizzio's cruel death—have observed his

* History of Scotland, by Sir Walter Scott.

† Medical Dictionary. Article, Antipathy.

mother express horror, as we might presume she would, of the instrument of the murder; and the deep and fearful impressions thus made on his tender mind, may have served to suppress his natural courage, and have been the occasion of his remarkable aversion to the sight of a drawn sword.

In the other example quoted, the mother would naturally be often telling of, and manifesting her repugnance to, a mouse, in the presence of her child, and thus necessarily create the same dread of it in his infant mind, the impression of which would be indelibly preserved. If a mother has a detestation of any particular insect, as a spider, for example, is it not well known that she will be repeatedly expressing it? every little while crying out to her child, with a fearful shudder, "Take care of that awful spider?" Is it strange, therefore, that the mind of her offspring, thus early imbued with, or, as it were, educated to, a horror of this insect, should ever afterwards retain it? "A man," observes Dr. Zimmermann, "who imbibes any particular idea in his early youth, is so strongly affected with it, that he never gives it up, even in maturer life, if it has been frequently repeated. In good truth, why do we see people so bigoted to some particular error, who are open to conviction in every other respect, and yet are blindly bigoted to this, but that from their infancy they have heard some absurd tale a thousand times repeated, and by these means the idea has been so firmly imprinted in them, that it would be as easy to whiten the Ethiopian as to remove their superstition?"

Although, then, our antipathies may sometimes be innate, and may possibly, in certain instances, be referrible to the influence of the imagination of the mother strongly excited during some period of gestation, nevertheless I conceive them much oftener to originate in some painful or alarming association with the object of aversion, engendered in infancy or childhood.

Mr. Locke, when speaking of antipathies, says, "a great part of these which are accounted natural would have been known to be from unheeded, though, perhaps, early impressions or wanton fancies at first, which would have been acknowledged the original of them, if they had been warily observed." *

It many times happens that the primary and incidental source of the antipathy is known and admitted. Thus, Peter the Great, when an infant, had a fall into the water on riding over a bridge; in consequence of which, even in mature life, he could neither bear the sight of water, nor the rattling of a carriage upon a bridge.

We can now see how essential it is in the education of children, to avoid, as far as may be, all occasions of erroneous association, or false prejudices,—exciting or cherishing imaginary terrors in relation to any particular object; as from such sources will often grow up aversions causing no little suffering both to body and mind during the whole future existence.

When antipathies already exist, and more especially if

* On the Human Understanding.

toward common objects, or such as we are every day liable to encounter, both health and happiness demand that the most persevering efforts be made to subdue them. They may generally be surmounted, either entirely or to a very considerable extent, by gradually inuring the mind to the presence or influence of the object of horror, the well-known effect of habit being to obtund the feelings. If, however, the repugnance be very strong, a greater share of moral energy than most persons possess will be required to vanquish it. James being naturally timid, and weak in his resolutions, never, that we learn, overcame his aversion to the naked sword. Whereas Peter, of a more bold and determined character, in the end completely conquered his painful dislike to the rattling of a carriage over a bridge, and his dread of the water, by resolutely exposing himself to the former, and repeatedly plunging into the latter.

It is an unaccountable fact in our constitution, that habit will in some cases not merely overcome an antipathy, but will actually beget a fondness for the object of former aversion. Thus does it happen that those who at first experience the greatest horror at the sight of blood, so that they can scarce look upon it without fainting, will, under the influence of custom, not unfrequently become the most bold and devoted surgeons. Nurses, and those females whose business it is to dress and prepare the dead for their last narrow receptacle, although at first perhaps sensitive, delicate, and moved with horror at the mere sight of a dead body, come at length to experience a pleasurable excitement, even a morbid delight among the gloomy scenes and

circumstances of their unnatural occupation. Sir Walter Scott, in the following dialogue, has well depicted, and scarcely caricatured the feelings of these crones of the death-chamber.

"'Ay! and that's e'en true, cummer,' said the lame hag, propping herself with a crutch, which supported the shortness of her left leg, 'for I mind when the father of this Master of Ravenswood that is now standing before us, sticked young Blackhall with his whinger, for a wrang word said ower their wine, or brandy, or what not—he gaed in as light as a lark, and he came out wi' his feet foremost. I was at the winding of the corpse; and when the bluid was washed off, he was a bonny bouk of a man's body.'

"'He's a frank man and a free-handed man, the master,' said Annie Winnie, 'and a comely personage, broad in the shouthers, and narrow around the lungies—he wad mak a bonny corpse—I wad like to hae the streaking and winding o' him.'

"'It is written on his brow, Annie Winnie,' returned the octogenarian, her companion, 'that hand of woman, or of man either, will never straught him—dead—deal will never be laid on his back—make you your market of that, for I hae it from a sure hand.'"*

In many other points in our moral nature, it is truly surprising how extremes may be changed, and not unfrequently in a brief space of time, to those of a directly opposite character. Hence the common saying, that fallen an-

* Bride of Lammermoor.

gels make the worst devils; and Old Apollyon himself, as we read, was once an angel of light. The formal and sanctimonious puritan, if he departs from goodness, will often pass to the most hopeless extreme of vice. The coy, prudish, blushing female, may become the most shameless and abandoned courtesan. The homespun clown, going to the metropolis, and casting aside his rustic garb, will not rarely become transfigured into the most laughable caricature of a city fopling. And the needy and low-bred wretch, and the ranting political leveller, on attaining to wealth and power, are apt to become the most arrogant, overbearing, and offensive aristocrats.

In some of our senses, but particularly in the sense of taste, this same principle holds in a very striking manner. Hence many articles which are in the beginning most offensive and sickening to the palate, will, under the power of habit, not only get to be agreeable, but absolutely necessary to our comfort. In tobacco we have a strong and familiar illustration of this remark. It is well known, too, how attached some people become to garlic, though at first so acrid and unpleasant. And even asafœtida, naturally so odious both to taste and smell, was held in such esteem by some of the ancients that they termed it "the meat of the gods." Oftentimes, therefore, while we become cloyed and wearied with, and get even to loathe the objects which were at first most pleasant to us, by a strange perversion of taste do we derive a permanent delight from those which were originally disgusting.

The development of antipathies is ever to be carefully

watched, and the mind gradually and cautiously habituated to the impression which awakens them. It is to be regretted, however, that a contrary practice more often prevails; the child either being scrupulously preserved from the object of his repugnance, or what is infinitely worse, his terrors of it are purposely excited, or aggravated, for the idle amusement of those who have not sense enough to comprehend the danger of such sport. The most disastrous consequences have sometimes resulted to children, as well as grown persons, by suddenly subjecting them to the influence of an object of their peculiar horror.

CHAPTER XXI.

GRIEF.—GENERAL REMARKS UPON THIS PASSION.—THE ACUTE STAGE, OR A PAROXYSM OF GRIEF DESCRIBED, WITH THE MORBID, AND EVEN FATAL EFFECTS OF WHICH IT MAY BE PRODUCTIVE.

GRIEF, consisting essentially in moral pain, must therefore enter to a greater or less extent, into all the passions of the class we are now considering. It bears, then, to the painful and depressing, a relation analogous to that of joy to the pleasurable and exciting passions.

Grief, presenting itself in diverse degrees and modifications, is consequently known under a variety of names, as sorrow, sadness, melancholy, dejection, &c., all of which induce similar phenomena in the bodily functions. The term is generally defined to mean the mental suffering arising from the privation of some good in possession, or the disappointment of some pleasing anticipation. I shall allow it, however, as will be seen in the sequel, a signification still broader than this definition implies.

The passion in question may be simple, as is most com-

mon under the loss of kindred and friends; or it may be united with chagrin, or impatient and angry repinings. And again, it may grow out of, and hence be blended with the various malignant feelings of the heart, as envy, jealousy, hatred, revenge, all of which are more or less fraught with moral pain. As it is a law of our constitution that every good and benevolent affection should bring with it its own recompense, so likewise is it that every evil one should become the author of its own punishment. "To love is to enjoy, to hate is to suffer." In hating we punish ourselves, not the object of our hate. Self-interest, therefore, if we are actuated by no better, should be a sufficient motive for us to cultivate the amiable, and to suppress the vicious feelings of our nature.

Grief may be acute and transient, or it may assume a more chronic or lasting character; in which latter case it is generally designated by the term sorrow, or sadness. Other things being equal, its violence will be proportioned to the suddenness and unexpectedness of the cause producing it.

I will now go on to describe the effects induced upon the bodily functions by the acute stage, or what is commonly denominated a paroxysm of grief; and most of these—for there is a close relationship among all the passions founded on pain—will be recognized as nearly resembling those which have already been depicted under the heads of anger and fear.

On the first strong impulse of mental affliction, an agonizing sense of oppression and stricture is experienced at the heart and lungs, accompanied with a distressing feeling

of impendent suffocation; it oftentimes seeming as though the whole chest were contracted, or bound with cords. The want of fresh air becomes at the same time exceedingly urgent, giving occasion to the deep and frequent sighing so commonly observed in those stricken with calamity. Sighing consists in a long drawn, or protracted inspiration, succeeded by a corresponding expiration, which, beside furnishing an increased supply of air, may, by distending the lungs, facilitate the passage of blood through them, and thus serve in a measure to alleviate the painful oppression felt in these organs and at the heart.

So distinct and remarkable is the suffering at the heart in deep grief, that it is frequently expressed by the term heart-ache, and its victims are said to die broken-hearted. Under its aggravated influence sharp pains even are felt in the heart, sometimes shooting up to the shoulder, and every pulsation of this organ is attended with a severe and thrilling distress.

It not rarely happens, particularly in nervous females, that a sort of spasm affects the throat, causing a sensation as if a ball was rising in it, and choking the passage of the air. Hence the familiar expression "to choke with sorrow." The dryness, likewise, in the mouth and throat, from the diminution in their natural secretions, adds to, and may even of itself occasion this choking sensation; and is moreover the cause, or at least in part, of the frequent and difficult swallowing so often noticed in acute grief.

Speaking, owing to this defect of moisture in the mouth and throat, as well as to the embarrassment at the heart and

lungs, is attended with a marked effort, and the voice is thick, husky, broken, tremulous, and weak.

The circulation, as would be supposed, feels the influence, in a greater or less degree, of this passion. Thus the pulse is generally weakened, oftentimes accelerated, occasionally becomes intermittent, or otherwise irregular; and the extreme vessels of the surface contracting unnaturally, and unsupplied with their wonted quantity of blood from the heart, the skin loses its customary warmth, and its ruddy tint of health. The energies of the nerves, too, becoming depressed and deranged under the morbid agency of this painful emotion, tremors, with various other of those disturbances which we term nervous, are likely to supervene.

The organs of the abdomen are also implicated in the general suffering. An uneasiness, in many cases quite severe, is referred to the region, or what we term the pit of the stomach. The appetite fails, and the powers of digestion become obviously impaired, and sometimes altogether suspended. Imagine one, while in the midst of the enjoyment of his dinner, to be unexpectedly apprised of some afflictive calamity, and the result scarce need be told. On the instant, as though touched by the wand of a magician, will the dishes before him, even the most savory, cease to delight his palate, and he turns, perhaps, with a painful sense of loathing from the very food which but a moment before he contemplated with the most eager desire. Or should he persist in his meal, every mouthful he tries to swallow seems to stick in his throat, and he is forced soon to abandon what has now become to him so disagreeable a task.

Again, suppose the meal to have been just finished on the abrupt excitement of this painful emotion, then there might ensue the various phenomena of indigestion, and even vomiting, were the mental shock extreme. Shakspeare had in view the particular effect of grief under notice, where he makes King Henry say to Cardinal Wolsey,—

> ——— "Read o'er this,
> And after, this, and then to breakfast with
> What appetite you have."

Grief often lessens the secretion of bile, or, by exciting a spasmodic contraction of its ducts, impedes its passage; whence the jaundiced hue of the skin which has been known to follow it. Sometimes it increases the amount, and vitiates the quality of this secretion, and even bilious vomitings have been produced by sharp affliction. Other secretions are in like manner affected by this emotion, being increased, lessened, and vitiated. Misfortune will often greatly diminish, or almost suppress the secretion of milk; or so vitiate its qualities as to render it highly noxious to the infant. Children have been attacked with convulsions, and palsy, on sucking immediately after the mother had experienced some painful calamity. Dr. Carpenter states that "the halitus from the lungs is sometimes almost instantaneously affected by bad news, so as to produce fœtid breath."*

In the young, generally, and in most females, at whatever age, on the first impression of ordinary grief, the visage

* Human Physiology.

suddenly becomes distorted, or drawn into a distressed and dismal expression, as under bodily suffering, and which is strikingly significant of the painful internal condition. With this disfiguration of the countenance, the respiration assumes a new or modified action. There takes place a deep, and often sonorous and tremulous inspiration, followed by an interrupted, or broken and imperfect expiration, conjoined with the familiar sounds so peculiarly expressive of both mental and bodily anguish, called sobbing or crying. The lachrymal secretion being at the same time much increased, the tears overflow the eyes, and roll down the cheeks. This act of weeping, especially when the tears run copiously, evinces a moderate or moderated sorrow, and is associated with a mitigation of the inward distress and oppression, as of the heart and lungs, and thus forms a sort of natural crisis to a paroxysm of grief, just as sweating does to a paroxysm of fever. Some persons can never weep, under afflictions of any character, and such generally experience much keener sufferings than those whose sorrows find a more ready outlet at their eyes. It is seldom that an individual dies in a fit of grief when weeping takes place freely.

Crying, though more particularly significant of grief, yet is by no means confined to it, but happens in various other emotions, as of tenderness, joy, anger, fear, &c., and may serve to lessen the danger of all violent passions.

It has been affirmed by some writers, that man is the only animal that signifies sorrow by weeping; but the truth of such assertion is not yet incontestably settled. That

the eyes of the inferior animals do oftentimes overflow with tears, is not to be disputed; but does this happen as a consequence of moral emotions? It is said of the orang-outang, that he has been observed to cry, much after the manner of our own species. The keeper of one which was exhibited a number of years ago in this country told me, that when grieved or angry she would cry "just like a child." Some other species of the monkey tribe, and even other animals, as the seal and camel, for example, have been asserted to shed tears under the influence of mental feelings. Extravagant grief is sometimes indicated by loud convulsive laughter. The readers of history will probably call to mind the story of Gelimer, king of the Vandals, told by Mr. Gibbon. The first public interview after he had been forced to surrender himself to Belisarius, "was in one of the suburbs of Carthage; and when the royal captive accosted his conqueror, he burst into a fit of laughter."

Violent outward expressions, or crying and noisy vociferations, by no means mark the deepest inward sufferings.

"Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent."

The following citation from Herodotus will form an apt illustration of the above remark.

"On the tenth day after the surrender of the citadel of Memphis, Psammenitus, the Egyptian king, who had reigned no more than six months, was, by order of Cambyses, ignominiously conducted, with other Egyptians, to the outside of the walls, and, by way of trial of his disposition, thus treated: His daughter, in the habit of a slave, was sent

with a pitcher to draw water; she was accompanied by a number of young women clothed in the same garb, and selected from families of the first distinction. They passed with much and loud lamentation before their parents, from whom their treatment excited a correspondent violence of grief. But when Psammenitus beheld the spectacle, he merely declined his eyes on the ground: when this train was gone by, the son of Psammenitus, with two thousand Egyptians of the same age, were made to walk in procession with ropes round their necks, and bridles in their mouths. These were intended to avenge the death of those Mitylenians who, with their vessel, had been torn to pieces at Memphis. The king's counsellors had determined that for every one put to death on that occasion, ten of the first rank of the Egyptians should be sacrificed. Psammenitus observed these as they passed; but although he perceived that his son was going to be executed, and while all the Egyptians around him wept and lamented aloud, he continued unmoved as before. When this scene also disappeared, he beheld a venerable personage, who had formerly partaken of the royal table, deprived of all he had possessed, and in the dress of a mendicant asking charity through the different ranks of the army. This man stopped to beg alms of Psammenitus, the son of Amasis, and the other noble Egyptians who were sitting with him; which, when Psammenitus beheld, he could no longer suppress his emotions, but calling on his friend by name, wept aloud and beat his head. This the spies, who were placed near him to observe his conduct on each incident, reported to Cambyses; who, in

astonishment at such behavior, sent a messenger, who was thus directed to address him: 'Your lord and master, Cambyses, is desirous to know why, after beholding with so much indifference your daughter treated as a slave, and your son conducted to death, you expressed so lively a concern for that mendicant, who, as he has been informed, is not at all related to you.' Psammenitus made this reply: 'Son of Cyrus, my domestic misfortunes were too great to suffer me to shed tears: but it was consistent that I should weep for my friend, who, from a station of honor and of wealth, is in the last stage of life reduced to penury.'"*

The keenest sorrow would appear to concentrate, and, as it were, benumb all the actions of life, and its unfortunate subject—his nervous energies completely overpowered—remains silent, motionless, stupefied; sometimes, as in a state of ecstasy, rigid and stiffened like a statue; whence Niobe, overwhelmed with the suddenness and greatness of her misfortunes, is fabled to have been changed into stone. Dr. Zimmermann has cited from Tulpius the case of a young Englishman, "who having met with a refusal from a lady, became perfectly rigid and motionless, sitting in the same attitude with his eyes open, and appearing rather like a statue than a human being; he continued in this posture till night, and then, on being told that his mistress yielded to his passion, he rose instantly as if from a profound sleep, became more cheerful, and soon recovered."

When grief breaks forth into tears and lamentations, and

* Book iii. 14.

violent muscular actions, as beating the breast, wringing the hands, tearing the hair, it shows an energy of resistance in the system, with a more general diffusion of the influence of the passion, and that we have less, therefore, to dread from its consequences. "The soul," as it has been said, "by giving vent to sighs and tears, seems to disentangle itself, and obtain more room and freedom." Anger, too, is here oftentimes awakened, and mingling with the original emotion, assists in promoting its reaction.

We can now see that it is not those who make the greatest ado about their troubles—who are ever, in season and out of season, forcing them upon the notice of others, that are likely to feel them the deepest. Slight grief is apt to prattle and complain, whereas the most profound is speechless, avoids every allusion to its source, shuns all society, even the intercourse and consolations of friendship, and tears and sighs are denied to it, or come but seldom to its relief.

We may furthermore learn that those persons who are anxious to hide their grief, who struggle to confine it within their own bosoms, must undergo far weightier sufferings than such as yield themselves freely to its impulses. Hence those sorrows which are of a more delicate or secret nature, and under which one is often obliged even to feign a contrary sentiment, produce the sharpest inward torture, and are the most speedily destructive to health and life.

"What equall torment to the griefe of mind,
And pyning anguish hid in gentle hart,
That inly feeds itselfe with thoughts unkind,

And nourisheth her own consuming smart?
What medicine can any leaches art
Yeeld such a sore that doth her grievance hide,
And will to none her maladie impart?"*

Sometimes under the sudden stroke of aggravated grief, the powers of life are so completely overwhelmed that they cannot react, and instant or speedy death is the consequence.

"In the war which King Ferdinand made upon the dowager of King John of Hungary, a man in armor was particularly taken notice of by every one for his extraordinary gallantry in a certain encounter near Buda, and being unknown, was highly commended, and as much lamented when left dead upon the spot, but by none so much as by Raisciac, a German nobleman, who was charmed with such unparalleled valor. The body being brought off the field of battle, and the count, with the common curiosity, going to view it, the armor of the deceased was no sooner taken off, but he knew him to be his own son. This increased the compassion of all the spectators; only the count, without uttering one word, or changing his countenance, stood like a stock, with his eyes fixed on the corpse, till, the vehemency of sorrow having overwhelmed his vital spirits, he sunk stone dead to the ground."† "Almost in the very moment that I am writing," says Dr. Zimmermann, "Prince George Louis of Holstein, having lost his wife, directed her corpse to be removed from the coffin in which it was placed, into another

* Spenser's Faery Queene.

† Montaigne's Essays.

of more costly materials; and when this was done, the prince kneeling down at the side of the coffin, desired his valet de chambre to read to him some pages of a pious book, melted into tears, and soon afterwards died."*

Under the sudden shock of grief, the heart and nervous system may become so greatly agitated and disturbed, as to place the life of the individual in much peril. Here a general throbbing is felt throughout the body, and a distinct thrill may be perceived in all the arteries whose pulsations are sensible, and the anxiety and distress are extreme. Dr. Hope records the case of a healthy plethoric young female, who, on receiving the intelligence that her husband had deserted her, fell into a state of almost complete insensibility, "and the violently bounding, jerking, and thrilling arterial throb, together with universal flushing, heat, and perspiration of the surface, resisted every remedy, and only subsided with the wane of life."†

Dr. William Stroud, in a volume of four hundred and ninety-six pages, published in London in 1847, on the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ, and its Relation to the Principles and Practice of Christianity, has, by a long series of facts and arguments, endeavored to show that the speedy death of Christ on the cross was owing to a rupture of the heart, produced by his mental agony and fear in the Garden, and upon the cross; and that this mode of death goes to fulfil several prophecies in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

* Experience in Physic.

† On Diseases of the Heart, &c.

Apoplexy, or some other equally fatal malady, is occasionally induced by sudden and poignant affliction, speedily terminating existence. Pope Innocent IV. died from the morbid effects of grief upon his system soon after the disastrous overthrow of his army by Manfred.

Severe grief may likewise call into action various nervous diseases of a more or less grave and lasting character; as palsy, epilepsy, catalepsy, ecstasy, St. Vitus's dance, and hysterics accompanied sometimes with convulsive laughter. And settled insanity in some of its forms, even dementia, has been known to follow upon sudden and great misfortune.

Dr. Whytt informs us that he had a patient who, upon the unexpected death of her husband, was seized with frequent fainting fits, generally holding her from five to fifteen minutes. "In these faintings she lay like a dead person, without any apparent breathing, or motion of the breast; only when a candle was held near her mouth, the flame was observed to move a little." In this way she continued for two days, coming out of the fits with sighings and crying, and falling into them again in little more than a quarter of an hour.* "It happened not long ago at London, that an Englishman who attended the funeral of his wife, lost the use of all his limbs, and continued speechless for some time afterwards."†

"Two young conscripts, who had recently joined the

* Observations on Nervous Diseases, &c.

† Zimmermann on Experience in Physic.

army, were called into action. In the heat of the engagement one of them was killed by a musket ball, at the side of his brother. The survivor, petrified with horror, was struck motionless at the sight. Some days afterwards he was sent in a state of complete idiotism to his father's house. His arrival produced a similar impression upon a third son of the same family. The news of the death of one of the brothers, and the derangement of the other, threw this third victim into a state of such consternation and stupor, as might have defied the powers of ancient or modern poetry to give an adequate representation of it."*

* Treatise on Insanity. By Ph. Pinel, Prof. of the School of Medicine at Paris, &c.

CHAPTER XXII.

GRIEF CONTINUED.—EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY FROM ITS MORE SLOW OR CHRONIC ACTION.

ALTHOUGH, as shown in the preceding chapter, an acute paroxysm of grief may be fraught with extreme hazard to health, and even life, yet it is the rooted and stubborn sorrow, from whose burden the heart finds no rest, to which disease and untimely death are the more frequently to be ascribed. No constitution is proof against the corroding influence of seated sorrow.

The deep and settled despondency consequent on a separation from the happy scenes and associations of one's native home, termed home-sickness; or the moral suffering proceeding from defeated ambition, reverses of fortune, the bereavement of near and dear relatives, or disappointment in the more tender affections of the heart, will not rarely engender or excite some serious malady, under whose influence life must speedily yield. And to those of a frail and delicate constitution, the danger from such unfortunate sources will be immeasurably enhanced.

Morton entitles one of his species of consumption, *a melancholia;* and Laennec, eminently distinguished for his writings and practical observations on diseases of the chest, is disposed to ascribe the greater prevalence of consumption in large cities, to the numerous and close relations among men, affording more frequent occasions for the development of the gloomy and bad passions of the heart. This latter author records the following remarkable example, which was ten years under his observation, of what he believed to be the effect of the melancholy and depressing passions in the production of consumption. "There existed, during the time mentioned, at Paris, a recent religious community of women, who, on account of the extreme severity of their regulations, had obtained only a conditional toleration from the ecclesiastical authority. Their diet, though austere, did not exceed what the powers of nature could endure; but the rigor of their religious rules was productive of effects both melancholy and surprising. Their attention was not only habitually fixed on the most terrible truths of religion, but they were tried by all kinds of opposition to induce them, as soon as possible, to renounce entirely their own proper will. The effects of this course were alike in all. At the end of one or two months an important function of their constitution became suppressed, and in one or two months more, consumption was evident. They not being bound by vows, I urged them, on the first manifestation of the symptoms of the malady, to quit the establishment; and almost all who followed the advice were cured, though many of them had already exhibited

evident signs of consumption. During the ten years that I was physician to this household, I saw it renewed two or three times by the successive loss of all its members, with the exception of a very small number, composed principally of the superior, the grate keeper, and the sisters who had the care of the garden, the kitchen, and the infirmary; and it is worthy of remark, that those persons were the ones who had the most frequent distractions from their religious austerities, and that they frequently went out into the city on duties connected with the establishment." The same author likwise tells us, that almost all the individuals whom he has seen become phthisical without the signs of the constitutional predisposition, appeared to owe the origin of their malady to deep or long continued sorrow.* I have seen it also remarked by another French writer, that phthisis, in those convents particularly where the discipline is severe, carries off a great number of the nuns. The gloomy state of mind induced by such austerity may, to say the least, operate in aid of other causes in generating or exciting this fatal malady.

Nostalgia, or home-sickness, (*maladie du pays* of the French,) through the deep moral suffering attending it, has not unfrequently called forth diseases of the chest, and particularly consumption. The Swiss, when removed from their own native mountains, are particularly liable to become affected with this malady, and sometimes fall victims

* Traité de l'Auscultation médiate et des Maladies des Poumons et du Cœur.

to it, when the lungs will often be found in a state of disease. But the natives of all countries, removed from the scenes, companions, and domestic associations of their native home, may become its subjects. Soldiers forced into the service often experience it in an aggravated degree, and it not seldom proves fatal to them. The natives of mountainous regions appear to be much more subject to home-sickness than the inhabitants of the plains. Esquirol observes that the mountaineer cannot bear a long absence from the home of his nativity, but continues to mourn, and at last pines away and dies if he cannot return to it. He accounts for this on the assumption that the inhabitants of mountainous districts are less civilized than those who dwell on the plains. But do not the more striking objects belonging to mountain scenery, its wild and varying beauties, its impressive boldness and grandeur, stamp themselves more deeply and indelibly upon the feelings, and so beget stronger and more lasting associations, than the tame, uniform, and artificial scenery of the cultivated plain?

The sorrow attendant on disappointed love, in those of frail and delicate constitutions, romantic and sensitive feelings, and secluded habits, is a not uncommon exciting cause of consumption.

Insanity, certainly where any predisposition exists to it in the system, is very liable to be developed by all such causes as depress and afflict the mind. In turning over the reports of different lunatic asylums, we shall learn that a large proportion of their cases are ascribed to moral afflictions; as unrequited love, great reverses of fortune and pe-

cuniary embarrassments, disappointed ambition, religious despondency, remorse, unhappy marriage and domestic trouble, loss of relatives, home-sickness, &c. We are told that the first question which M. Pinel was in the habit of putting to a new patient, who still retained some remains of intelligence, was, "have you undergone any vexation or disappointment?" and that the reply was seldom in the negative. The causes alluded to being always most influential in civilized life, is regarded as one principal reason why insanity prevails in proportion to the cultivation of society. Domestic trials rank among the most frequent moral sources of insanity, and especially among women. Disappointed affection is also a common cause of this malady, but it excites it much oftener, according to M. Esquirol, in females than in males. Women, he tells us, with whom love is the great business of life, bear with much more difficulty than men, the effects of its disappointment. His tables also show that they more often become insane from jealousy. "I have had occasion," says Dr. Zimmermann, "to see all the great hospitals in Paris, and have distinguished in them three kinds of mad people. The men, who were become so through pride; the girls, through love; and the women, through jealousy. All these people had the appearance of so many furies.

"Among the lunatics confined at Bicetre, during the year 3 of the republic, whose cases I particularly examined, I observed that the exciting causes of their maladies, in a great majority of instances, had been very vivid affections of the mind, such as ungovernable or disappointed ambition, religious fanaticism, profound chagrin, and unfortunate love.

Out of one hundred and thirteen madmen, with whose histories I took pains to inform myself, thirty-four were reduced into this state by domestic misfortunes; twenty-four by obstacles to matrimonial connections which they had ardently desired to form; thirty by events connected with the revolution, and twenty-five by religious fanaticism."*

In those disastrous periods when poverty and reverses of fortune are most common, mental derangement has been observed to become more frequent.

"Anxiety and agitation of mind caused by political events, have occasionally produced a very decided effect on the numbers of persons becoming deranged. M. Esquirol declares that the law of conscription increased the number of lunatics in France, and that at every period of this levy, many individuals were received into the hospitals, who had become insane through the excitement and anxiety occasioned by it; they were partly from the number of those on whom the lot fell, and partly from their friends and relatives. 'The influence of our political misfortunes has been so great,' says the same writer, 'that I could illustrate the history of our revolution, from the taking of the Bastile to the last appearance of Bonaparte, by describing in a series the cases of lunatics, whose mental derangement was in connection with the succession of events.'"†

Monomania is a form of insanity not uncommonly following the chronic action of grief. If an individual of the mel-

* Pinel on Insanity.

† Prichard on Insanity.

ancholic temperament sustains some grave misfortune, he is apt to brood over it in painful despondency. His general health, therefore, soon becomes impaired, his moral energy languishes, and no motive can arouse him to wholesome exertion. In time his melancholy gets more deep and settled, his temper often grows morose, irritable, suspicious, misanthropic, and at length some unhappy and erroneous impression fastens upon his imagination, and maintaining despotic sway over all his thoughts and feelings, he becomes a confirmed monomaniac.

Obdurate sorrow has sometimes caused a total wreck of all the powers and affections of the mind, leaving a hopeless dementia as its mournful sequel.

The opulent or higher classes would appear to be more exposed to moral sufferings and their morbid consequences, than those who occupy humbler ranks in society. "Even those superior intellectual advantages of education," says Dr. Reid, "to which the more opulent are almost exclusively admitted, may, in some cases, open only new avenues to sorrow. The mind, in proportion as it is expanded, exposes a larger surface to impression." The rich and cultivated have generally more delicate and refined sensibilities, and are more exposed than the inferior classes to the vicissitudes of fortune, as loss of property, wounded pride, disappointed ambition.

Numerous instances are recorded, both by ancient and modern medical authors, where habitual epilepsy has resulted from the baneful influence of moral calamities.

Palsies, likewise, and other melancholy nervous affections are not uncommonly attributable to the same source.

When we consider how immediate and forcible is the impulse of grief upon the heart, it will excite no surprise that disease of this organ should sometimes proceed from its severe and continued operation. Desault and several other French writers have remarked that during the unhappy period of the revolution, maladies of the heart and aneurisms of the aorta became obviously multiplied. Nothing is more common than for derangements of the function of the heart, indicated by intermissions, and other painful and sometimes dangerous irregularities in its pulsations, to be the consequence of lasting anxiety and mental dejection; and such functional disorders, when long continued, may even terminate in some fatal change in the structure of the organ.

Examples, indeed, are not wanting where the first indications of diseases of the heart have been referred to the sudden impression of some painful disaster, under which the organ sustained a shock from whose violence it could never recover. We find an interesting case of this description recorded by the Chevalier Pelletan, in a memoir published by him a number of years since, and while he was chief surgeon of the Hotel Dieu, in Paris, on certain diseases of the heart. The subject of this record was an Irishman, thirty-six years of age, and of the most ungovernable passions. Having experienced during the revolutionary struggle various fortunes and sufferings, he at length, on the affairs of France assuming a more favorable aspect,

obtained a pension of twelve thousand francs, but which was immediately taken from him on the death of the patron by whom it had been procured. This last misfortune, it would seem, completely overthrew him. "He has told me a hundred times," says the Chevalier, "that on hearing the news of his loss, he immediately felt a dreadful weight in his chest. His respiration became fatiguing, and the palpitations of his heart assumed an irregularity, which had no interruption during the two years and a half that he survived his misfortune."

From the period when deprived of his pension, organic disease of the heart appears to have declared itself, and to have gone on increasing in all its terrible symptoms, until the end of two years and five months, when his strength became subdued, and he obtained relief in death.

On inspecting the body, the heart was found colorless, and its whole substance in a remakable state of flaccidity, such as the distinguished narrator of this case had never before witnessed. "The parietes of the cavities fell together, and the flesh of this organ might be compared to the pale and shrunken muscles of an old woman; there was an astonishing contrast between the flesh of the heart and that of the other muscles of the body." M. Pelletan concluded that the heart, in consequence of the violent mental shock, was struck with a sort of paralysis, and that death ultimately took place from the complete palsy of the organ. It was manifestly, however, a case of chronic softening of the heart, with loss of color, a peculiar morbid condition which has since been recognized. The individual, at any rate, perished

of a disease of the heart, the first indications of which immediately followed a strong impression of grief, and this is all that is necessary to our present purpose.

Dyspepsia is another complaint exceedingly liable to be induced under the protracted operation of sorrow. Dr. Heberden observes, "there is hardly any part of the body which does not sometimes appear to be deeply injured by the influence of great dejection of spirits; and none more constantly than the stomach and bowels, which hardly ever escape *unharassed* with pains, an uneasy sense of fulness and weight, indigestions, acidities, heartburn, sickness, and wind, in such an extraordinary degree, as to threaten a choking, and to affect the head with vertigo and confusion."* And Dr. Whytt also remarks, that "long continued grief and anxiety of mind weaken the tone of the stomach, destroy the appetite and digestion, occasion thirst, a white tongue, flatulence, and other complaints."†

Chronic inflammation, and even scirrhus and cancer of the stomach, will sometimes succeed the deep and prolonged influence of the passion I am noticing. Laennec asserts that the depressing passions, when long operative, seem to contribute to the growth of cancers, and the various other accidental productions which are unlike any of the natural structures of the body.‡

Bonaparte died of an extensive ulceration of the stomach,

* Commentaries.

† Observations, &c., p. 207.

‡ Traité de l'Auscultation, &c.

which the physicians who inspected his body pronounced to be cancerous. Now, that his malady was originated or excited by the sorrow and chagrin arising from his painful reverse of fortune, and the wrongs and unkind treatment which he received, or fancied he received, while on the island of St. Helena, is, to say the least, far from being improbable. The father of Napoleon having fallen a victim to cancer of the stomach, many have thought that a predisposition to this disease was inherited by the Emperor. Admitting such to have been the fact, we can then only regard his complaint as developed and hastened, not as primarily produced, by the depressing passions which tormented the latter period of his existence. No distinct tokens of the ailment which destroyed him, were, at any rate, disclosed till about a year subsequent to his arrival upon the island, when he first began to complain of an uneasy sensation in his stomach and right side. It was not, however, until October of the following year that he was subjected to any medical treatment. From this time the disease went on slowly, though steadily advancing, and on the fifth of May, 1821, as the day was about closing, this extraordinary man yielded to its power, and his mighty spirit rested for ever from its vexations and sufferings.

The liver is also very subject, earlier or later, to participate in the morbid effects of mental dejection. At first its secretion is apt to be diminished or obstructed, whence constipation of the bowels, sallowness of the skin, and a train of symptoms generalized under the familiar term *bilious*, commonly supervene, passing at times even into decided jaun-

dice. Biliary concretions, or gall-stones, are said to be very frequent in such as have experienced long continued moral despondency, and it has likewise been asserted that they are generally found in the gall-bladder of the victims of suicide. M. Pelletan observes that he has ascertained this fact a great many times in subjects who had been induced to self-murder by lasting distress, but never in those who had committed it on account of sudden grief and despair, such as happens after losses in gaming, or from disappointed love.

Even fatal organic changes may sometimes be induced in the liver by the operation of deep and prolonged mental sufferings. Such, however, can scarce be regarded as a common result, unless the individual, through the influence of climate, is disposed to hepatic disease, or, driven on by the weight of his afflictions, adds the morbid effect of intemperance to that of the moral cause.

The depression of sorrow, as of fear, conduces to the action both of contagion, and of epidemic influences, and is also, like that of fear, unfriendly to the restorative processes in all diseases and injuries of the body. Every one knows that the danger of sickness becomes essentially aggravated by mental afflictions. And what judicious surgeon but would feel diminished confidence in the success of an important operation, were the spirits of its subject borne down by the pressure of grief?

When sorrow becomes settled and obstinate, the whole vital economy must, ere a long while, experience its baneful effects. Thus the circulation languishes, nutrition becomes

imperfect, perspiration is lessened, and the animal temperature is sustained with difficulty; the extremities being in a special manner liable to suffer from coldness. The skin, moreover, grows pale and contracted, the eye loses its wonted animation, deep lines, indicative of the distress within, mark the countenance, and the hairs soon begin to whiten or fall out. The effect of the painful passions in depriving the hairs of their coloring matter, is many times really astonishing. Bichat states that he has known five or six instances, where, under the oppression of grief, the hair has lost its color in less than eight days. And he further adds that the hair of a person of his acquaintance became almost entirely white in the course of a single night, upon the receipt of melancholy intelligence.*

The sleep of the afflicted is generally diminished, broken, disturbed by gloomy and terrifying fancies, haunted and distressed by a revival, in new and modified forms, of their waking sorrows, and thus is rarely granted to them even the paltry solace of a few hours' oblivion to their sufferings; and repose is oftentimes almost a stranger to the couch of misery.

"Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep;
He, like the world, his ready visit pays
Where Fortune smiles: the wretched he forsakes;
Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
And lights on lids unsullied with a tear."†

* Anatomie Générale. † Young.

The nervous system, subjected to the depressing influence of which I have been speaking, soon becomes shattered, and soul and body mutually wearing upon each other, the energies of both at last sink into irretrievable decay.

CHAPTER XXIII.

GRIEF CONTINUED.—DESPAIR AND SUICIDE.—GRIEF UNDERGOES CERTAIN MODIFICATIONS, AND IS MORE OR LESS BLUNTED BY TIME, ACCORDING TO THE NATURE OF ITS CAUSES.—SEVERE IS OFTEN BORNE WITH MORE RESIGNATION THAN LIGHTER SORROW.—IN YOUTH, GRIEF IS APT TO BE ACUTE AND TRANSIENT, IN AGE, CHRONIC AND LASTING.

DESPAIR is the name by which we express that extremity of moral depression, against which the mind has no power of reaction. Under this dreadful feeling, no ray of hope, no sunbeam of joy, breaks in upon the Cimmerian darkness of the soul. To one who has reached this utter state of despondency, life is no longer desirable; the charms of nature or of art call forth no throb of delight in his dark spirit, and the cheerful earth spreads out before him like some gloomy and barren wilderness.

"He now no more, as once, delighted views
Declining twilight melt in silvery dews,
No more the moon a soothing lustre throws,
To calm his care, and cheat him of his woes,

But anguish drops from Zephyr's fluttering wing,
Veiled is the sun, and desolate the spring,
The glittering rivers sadly seem to glide,
And mental darkness shrouds creation's pride."*

Despair may proceed from a sense of blasted fame, deep humiliation, or wounded self-love, under which existence, to the proud man, becomes an unremitting torture. It may, in like manner, follow blighted expectations, irretrievable losses, and suddenly ruined fortune,—as happens often to the gamester; and it oftentimes attends remorse of conscience, whether for real or imaginary offences, and great public calamities, as destructive epidemics, unhappy political revolutions, or other grave national misfortunes.

Remorse sometimes becomes the occasion of the most hopeless despondence, and frequently where there is no real cause for it, except in the individual's own morbid sensibility. It has been said, indeed, that "remorse is often felt most acutely by those who have the least reason for self-accusation." Some persons become utterly wretched from the false and idle notion that they have been useless to the world, have done no good to their fellow-creatures, have been unfaithful stewards, &c., and this idea, preying upon an unnatural nervous susceptibility, has even provoked self-destruction. The most deep wounding and even fatal stings of conscience sometimes follow, in highly sensitive natures, upon unfortunate, though unpurposed results of

* Merry's Pains of Memory.

actions. "A disastrous result," says Dr. Reid, "not unfrequently reflects the horror of guilt upon that conduct, which would otherwise have escaped any injurious imputation, which would have been deemed innocent in its character, had it proved so in its consequences. . . . . A man's character may be shaded by the accidents, as well as by the actions, of his life. And perhaps, even conscience itself is seldom more deeply wounded by the stings of guilt, than it sometimes has been by the arrows of fortune." He mentions in illustration the singular history of Simon Brown, "the dissenting clergyman, who fancied that he had been deprived by the Almighty of his immortal soul, in consequence of having accidentally taken away the life of a highwayman, although it was done in the act of resistance to his threatened violence, and in protection of his own person. Whilst kneeling upon the wretch whom he had succeeded in throwing upon the ground, he suddenly discovered that his prostrate enemy was deprived of life."*

Contrition for absolute guilt when yielded to as a mere passive, unprolific feeling, is liable to be followed by a deep and hopeless moral despondence, and to which both mental and physical enegies at last fall a sacrifice. But when it takes the character of an actuating sentiment, then do its sufferings become materially lightened, and its effects are alike propitious to the individual, and useful to society. The following reflections on this subject are well worthy the serious meditation of all repentant sinners.

* Essays, &c.

"Remorse itself is considered, perhaps too indiscriminately, as a compensation for misconduct. When it is an unproductive feeling merely, and not a regenerating principle, instead of mitigating, it can serve only to aggravate our offences. Repentance, sentimentally indulged, often stands in the way of a practical reformation. The pressure of conscious criminality ought to be sufficient to rouse into action, but not so great as to crush altogether the powers of the mind. Contrition is most easily indulged in a state of indolence and solitude; but can be alleviated only by strenuous efforts in the service of society. The errors of our past life are not to be atoned by wasting the remainder of it in a sedentary grief, or in idle lamentations. Every good deed which a man performs, lightens, in a certain degree, the load of recollected guilt. Active duty is alone able to counteract the injury, or to obliterate the stain, of transgression.

"In even aggravated cases of remorse, much may be done towards relief, if the patient have resolution enough to administer to himself; to awaken from the lethargy of a vain regret; and make every atonement in his power for any wrong that he has committed, or any moral law which he has broken. A man may compensate to society, for an injury that is perhaps irreparable to an individual; and by the extraordinary exertions of a penitentiary benevolence, be the means of producing a quantity of happiness that is equivalent to the misery which his former vices or errors may have occasioned."*

* Reid's Essays, &c.

In those especially of timid, gloomy, and superstitious dispositions, despair will not unfrequently result from injudiciously awakened religious terrors; the deluded individual conceiving himself an outcast from God's mercy, predestined to the eternal horrors and torments which mad bigotry has portrayed to his fancy. "There is a kind of *Melancholy*," says Dr. George Cheyne, "which is called *Religious*, because 'tis conversant about Matters of *Religion*; although often the Persons so distempered have little *solid Piety*. And this is merely a *bodily Disease*, produced by an ill *Habit* or *Constitution*, wherein the *nervous System* is broken and disordered, and the *Juices* are become *viscid* and *glewy*. This *Melancholy* arises generally from a *Disgust* or *Disrelish* of worldly *Amusements* and *Creature-Comforts*, whereupon the Mind turns to *Religion* for *Consolation* and *Peace:* But as the Person is in a very imperfect and unmortified State, not duly instructed and disciplined, and ignorant how to govern himself, there ensues *Fluctuation* and *Indocility*, *Scrupulosity*, *Horror*, and *Despair*."*

There is a species of mental despondence, the offspring of great public calamities, which produces a strange effect upon our moral nature; begetting, at times, even a carelessness of existence; and where great numbers, driven on to despair, precipitate the termination of their own existence. Hecker tells us that Lubeck, at that time the Venice of the North, with an overflowing population, was thrown into such

* On Health and Long Life. London, 1734, p. 157.

consternation by the eruption of the plague, or Black Death of the fourteenth century, that the citizens destroyed themselves as if in frenzy.

It is true that man's full energies can only be elicited by great afflictions and great dangers, if they be not so aggravated as to overwhelm, and benumb with despair. They put our self-love and self-denial to the true test, and form the rightful assay both of our moral and intellectual nature. No one has been proved who has not been *tried*. But then as they may bring out the brightest points of human character, so also may they its darkest shades. It seems oftentimes that the more precarious is the tenure by which man holds his existence, the more desperate, wicked, and reckless of life does he become. Hence amid the ravages of war or pestilence, when no one feels secure of his being even from hour to hour, all laws human and divine are often set at defiance, and the most appalling cruelties enacted by the infatuated, despairing people. I will not here speak of great political revolutions where each one's life, and all that renders life dear, are in constant jeopardy—every body knows the black history of crime which marks the progress of these terrible disruptions in human society—but will only cite a few facts corroborative of the foregoing assertions, from the history of one of those fearful pestilences where nature lets loose her destructive influences upon wide regions of the earth. "It speaks," says its historian, "of terrible disasters, of despair, and unbridled demoniacal passions. It shows us the abyss of general licentiousness, in consequence

of a universal pestilence which extended from China to Iceland and Greenland."*

In this desolating epidemic—the Black Death, or Black Plague of the fourteenth century—it is stated that at least one quarter of the population of the old world was destroyed in the space of four years; and that some countries, and among them England, lost more than double that proportion of their inhabitants in the course of a few months. Kairo, according to Hecker, lost daily of her inhabitants, when the plague was most violent, from ten to fifteen thousand. China is said to have lost more than thirteen millions. India was depopulated. Tartary, Mesopotamia, Syria, &c., were covered with dead bodies. In Caramania and Cæsarea, none were left alive. Cyprus lost almost all its inhabitants. In the report made to Pope Clement, at Avignon, it was stated that throughout the East, probably with the exception of China, twenty-three millions eight hundred and forty thousand people perished by this plague.

"In many places in France not more than two out of twenty of the inhabitants were left alive, and the capital felt the fury of the plague, alike in the palace and the cot."

"In Avignon, the Pope found it necessary to consecrate the Rhone, that bodies might be thrown into the river without delay, as the churchyards would no longer hold them."

The whole duration of the destructive violence of this pestilence in Europe, was, with the exception of Russia, from the year 1347 to 1350; and the loss of its inhabitants

* Hecker's Epidemics, &c.

by the disease is set down at twenty-five millions. Yet the human race speedily recovered itself from this incredible desolation; the past mortality was soon repaired—as has been observed to happen after all wasting epidemics—by a more rapid reproduction, (for nature, although seemingly regardless of individuals, ever exhibits a provident care of species,) and the world aroused from its torpor and depression to new life, and new power of action.

Under such a general and appalling calamity, with the awful terrors of death menacing every one, surely might it be thought that the human heart would have been softened, sobered, renovated,—awakened to moral and religious reflection. But what says the historian? "Morals were deteriorated every where, and the service of God was, in a great measure, laid aside." The masses of the people, as it appears, became generally hardened, selfish, avaricious, corrupted, and, by a sort of reckless despair, were urged onward to all manner of enormities.

The cruelties enacted at this time on the part of the Chistians towards the Jews, on the alleged ground that the latter had poisoned the wells, are in the highest degree reproachful to our nature. The promise to embrace Christianity, and submitting themselves to baptism, could alone save this unjustly oppressed people from a painful death. Few, however, would accept life on terms like these. At Strasburg, two thousand Jews were burnt alive upon a large scaffold erected in their own burial ground. All the Jews in Basle, whose number was large, were inclosed in a wooden building constructed for the purpose, and burnt

together with it, at the mere instigation of the mob. In Mayence alone, twelve thousand Jews were cruelly martyred. "At Eslington the whole Jewish community burned themselves in their synagogue; and mothers were often seen throwing their children on the pile, to prevent their being baptized, and then precipitating themselves into the flames. In short, whatever deeds fanaticism, revenge, avarice, and desperation, in fearful combination, could instigate mankind to perform—and where in such a case is the limit?—were executed in the year 1349, throughout Germany, Italy, and France, with impunity, and in the eyes of all the world. It seemed as if the plague gave rise to scandalous acts and frantic tumults, not to mourning and grief: and the greater part of those who, by their education and rank, were called upon to raise the voice of reason, themselves led on the savage mob to murder and to plunder." "Many breathed their last without a friend to smooth their dying pillow; and few indeed were they who departed amid the lamentations and tears of their friends and kindred. Instead of sorrow and mourning, appeared indifference, frivolity and mirth; this being considered, especially by the females, as conducive to health. . . . . During the prevalence of the Black Plague, the charitable orders conducted themselves admirably, and did as much good as can be done by individual bodies, in times of great misery and destruction; when compassion, courage, and the nobler feelings, are found but in the few; while cowardice, selfishness and ill-will, with the baser passions in their train, assert the supremacy. In place of virtue which had been driven from

the earth, wickedness every where reared her rebellious standard, and succeeding generations were consigned to the dominion of her baleful tyranny."*

In his account of the plague at Athens, Thucydides writes, that amid a calamity so violent, and such universal despair, things sacred and holy had quite lost their distinction. The pestilence first gave rise to those iniquitous acts which increased more and more in Athens. "Not any one continued resolute enough to form any honest or generous design, when so uncertain whether he should live to effect it. Whatever he knew could improve the pleasure or satisfaction of the present moment, that he determined to be honor and interest. Reverence of the gods or of the laws of society laid no restraint upon men." Still human nature here, as under all conditions, presents many ennobling traits. Its dark side is set off by many generous, disinterested, and self-sacrificing actions; but they are performed in private, and known therefore but to the few; while wickedness stalks abroad, and rears its head every where to public view.

To return to my more immediate topic:—Despair consisting in utter moral desolation, or the complete absence of all hope, abandons every exertion for the future. Thus does it either shun altogether the intercourse of man, burying itself in the deepest gloom and solitude, or seeks to lessen the intensity of its misery by violent and undetermined action or dissipation. Sometimes it urges on its reckless

* Hecker's Epidemics, &c.

victim to the most criminal and desperate acts,—to gross intemperance, or some more sudden method of throwing off a hated existence. Those even who are hopeless of God's mercy, and look forward but to everlasting torture hereafter, will often hurry themselves to meet the very worst their imagination can paint, rather than endure the agony of despair produced by their dreadful apprehensions; as one will sometimes leap down the dizzy height, the bare view of which sickened his brain, and filled his soul with terror.

When despair does not impel to such rash deeds, all consciousness of suffering either becomes lost in insanity, or the physical energies soon yield to its overwhelming influence. Existence can rarely last long under the privation of every enjoyment and the extinction of every hope.

Grief, in whatever measure it may exist, will always be most obstinate and dangerous in those unengaged in active pursuits, and who have consequently leisure to brood over their troubles in silence and solitude. Bodily and mental activity, and more especially when the result of necessity, must, by creating fresh trains of association, and diverting the thoughts into new channels, tend to weaken the poignancy of affliction. Nothing, in truth, serves more effectually to lighten the calamities of life, than steady and interesting employment. It is, as I conceive, for the reason that females are generally exempt from the cares and excitements of business, and confined at home to their own relatively tranquil domestic duties, that they so much oftener pine and sicken under wounded affections, than our own more active and busy sex. It is a fact which has been often noted in

the history of fleets and armies, that when actively engaged in warlike duties, the troops are comparatively little subject to physical disease or moral despondence. Dr. Good observes that "suicide is frequent in the distress of sieges, in the first alarm of civil commotion, or when they have subsided into a state of calmness, and the mischiefs they have induced are well pondered; but it seldom takes place in the activity of a campaign, whatever may be the fatigue, the privations, or the sufferings endured. On the fall of the Roman empire, and throughout the revolution of France, self-destruction was so common at home, as at last to excite but little attention. It does not appear, however, to have stained the retreat of the ten thousand under Xenophon, and, according to M. Falret, was rare in the French army during its flight from Moscow."*

The subject of suicide, referred to in the above quotation, involving as it does so many curious facts and inquiries, and being so frequent a consequence of the pressure of grief, a few general remarks upon it may not be deemed irrelevant to our present matter.

Suicide in ancient days, and particularly among the Romans when they were at the summit of their glory, was, under many circumstances, not merely excused, but looked upon as a praiseworthy and heroic act; and it was even held to be base and cowardly to cling to existence under suffering and ignominy. The Stoics countenanced it. Many of the noblest of the Roman commanders—among whom Bru-

* Study of Medicine.

tus may be mentioned—when the fortune of war turned against them, chose a voluntary death sooner than bear the disgrace of a defeat; and this was regarded as a glorious consummation of their lives.

Cato the younger has, both in ancient and modern times, been held up as an illustrious example of stern and virtuous patriotism, because he took his own life rather than submit to the dominion of Cæsar. Cato's suicide, as often happened in those days, showed the most determined and desperate resolution, and it has frequently been lauded on this very account. He first stabbed himself, but owing to an inflammation which at the time affected his hand, did not strike hard enough at once to complete the work of death, but falling from his bed in his struggles, his son and friends were alarmed and entered his room, where they found him weltering in his blood, and with his bowels fallen out, but yet alive. The physician, perceiving the bowels uninjured, put them back and began to sew up the wound; but Cato in the meanwhile, coming a little to himself, "thrust away the physician, tore open the wound, plucked out his own bowels, and immediately expired." Great honors were paid to the body by all the people of Utica, and Cæsar himself is reported to have said that he envied Cato his death.*

The Roman Lucretia, because she plunged a dagger into her breast rather than survive her ravished honor, has acquired a fame which will be likely to endure as long as female virtue is regarded. And of Portia, the daughter of

* Plutarch. Life of Cato the younger.

Cato and wife of Brutus, who, being cut off from other means, killed herself by forcing burning coals into her mouth, or, as is commonly told, by swallowing fire, Plutarch says, she "put a period to her life in a manner worthy of her birth and of her virtue."

Plato considered suicide to be justifiable under circumstances of severe and unavoidable misfortune: but for such as committed it from faintheartedness, or a want of moral courage to confront the ordinary chances of life, he directed an ignominious burial. Virgil, however, seems to have regarded it as unexceptionably criminal, having assigned a place in the shades below for all those who have voluntarily taken off their own lives, as appears from the following passage in his Æneid.

"Proxima deinde tenent mœsti loca, qui sibi lethum
Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
Projecere animas. Quàm vellent æthere in alto
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!
Fata obstant, tristique palus inamabilis undâ
Alligat, et novies Styx interfusa coercet."*

"The next, in place and punishment, are they
Who prodigally threw their souls away—
Fools, who, repining at their wretched state,
And loathing anxious life, suborned their fate.
With late repentance, now they would retrieve
The bodies they forsook, and wish to live;

* Lib. vi., v. 434.

Their pains and poverty desire to bear,
To view the light of heav'n, and breathe the vital air:
But fate forbids; the Stygian floods oppose,
And with nine circling streams the captive souls inclose."*

We read that a law of the elder Tarquin forbade the body of the suicide the right of sepulture. In Athens, also, a penal enactment existed in regard to self-murder. Lycurgus, the famous Spartan lawgiver, justified this act by his own example.

In certain countries people sacrifice themselves in accordance with the customs of society, as the Hindoo widow, who is voluntarily consumed on the funeral pile of her husband; or under the belief that they are performing a religious act acceptable to their gods, as the Indian devotee who throws himself beneath the car of Juggernaut.

"There are certain governments," Montaigne tells us, "which have taken upon them to regulate the justice, and proper time of voluntary deaths." And he says on the authority of Valerius Maximus, that "a poison prepared from hemlock, at the expense of the public, was kept in times past in the city of Marseilles, for all who had a mind to hasten their latter end, after they had produced the reasons for their design to the six hundred who composed their senate; nor was it lawful for any person to lay hands upon himself, otherwise than by leave of the magistracy, and upon just occasions."†

* Dryden's Translation.

† Essays.

In civilized countries self-murder, although unhappily of so frequent occurrence, finds at the present time few advocates, being generally regarded with sentiments of the deepest horror, and among some people and sects the rites of Christian sepulture are denied to its victims. To this denial of Christian obsequies Shakspeare has allusion in the scene of Ophelia's burial, in his play of Hamlet.

"*Laer.* What ceremony else?
1 *Priest.* Her obsequies have been as far enlarg'd
As we have warranty: Her death was doubtful;
And, but that great command o'ersways the order,
She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trumpet; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her:
Laer. Must there no more be done?
1 *Priest.* No more be done!
We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing a *requiem*, and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls."

In England, at one period, the body of the suicide was cast into the highway. In aftertime it was buried where three roads met. In France there was a time when the household goods of the suicide were given to the proprietor of the soil on which the deed was perpetrated. Afterwards his body was drawn through the streets upon a hurdle. At the present day these laws—if they still exist on the statute-book—have become obsolete. It is said, however, that a

law exists in Saxony by which the body of the suicide is given up for public dissection.

One might suppose that nothing short of the most consummate and hopeless misery could overcome the strong feeling that binds us to existence; and it is generally true that only the severest moral afflictions, either real or imaginary, or sudden transports of passion which, for the time, vanquish the reason, can provoke to a deed so rash and unnatural as self murder. Still there are exceptions, nor are they rare, where its causes are of a different and less explainable character. Physical sufferings may sometimes be its cause, though far less often than those of a moral nature.

That, like the different forms of insanity with which it is so frequently associated, it is often hereditary, is now proved beyond question. There are few persons, it is presumed, who will not be able to call to mind examples of the hereditary transmission of a propensity to suicide. It is remarkable, too, that the disposition to it will sometimes be developed in different members of a family at nearly the same period of life. Esquirol relates of a man, whose father and grandfather had destroyed themselves when fifty-three years old, that at the age of fifty he began to experience the temptation to suicide, and was satisfied that he should die as they had done. He also cites from Voltaire an example where a man of good habits, mature age, and a serious profession, committed suicide, and left to the officers of his native city a written defence of the act. His father and brother had before destroyed themselves at the same age with himself. He further cites from Dr. Gall

an instance where seven brothers, possessed of large fortunes, in excellent health, honorable in their lives, and held in high and general estimation, all committed suicide when between thirty and forty years of age. Numerous examples might be cited where the whole, or nearly the whole of the members of large families have, one after another, fallen by their own hands. In some cases this hereditary propensity begins to be exprienced at quite an early age.

In the opinion of M. Falret, of all the forms of melancholy, that which tends to suicide is most frequently hereditary; and he gives an instance where all the female members of a family for three succeeding generations committed or attempted suicide.

We read that a club existed in Prussia, comprising six members, all of whom, in accordance with its rules, terminated their lives by their own hands. And of one also in Paris in more recent times, a regulation of which was that one of its number should be selected every year to destroy himself.

Dr. Millingen knew a person who could never drink tea without experiencing a desire to commit suicide, "and nothing could arouse him from this state of morbid excitement but the pleasure of destroying something, books, papers, or any thing within his reach. Under no other circumstances than this influence of tea were these fearful aberrations observed."* Esquirol informs us that M. Alibert attended a lady who always felt a desire to destroy herself

* Curiosities of Medical Experience.

after eating; and that she was often discovered after dinner in the act of passing a cord around her neck, so that it became necessary to keep a close watch upon her. Here some morbid condition of the digestive function was doubtless the exciting cause of the propensity. Persons have killed themselves out of spite, or from malignity. Also from the hopes of bettering their condition; and to escape their agonizing fears of death, or future punishment. In some persons attempts at suicide are always excited by intoxication; and despair at not being able to conquer the debasing appetite for intoxicating drinks has been the occasion of self-destruction. Esquirol records an instance of a man, thirty years of age, and in excellent health, killing himself a few days after marriage, because his wife did not come up to his high-raised expectations.

Nostalgia, ennui, or weariness of life, from perverted or exhausted sensibilities, rank among the not unusual causes of suicide. Some persons, without any other evidence of ill health, become affected with an unaccountable torpor and listlessness, both of mind and body; every effort of either becoming difficult and irksome to them. They consequently grow discouraged, fancy themselves useless, or perhaps a burden to their families and to society, and are thus impelled to throw off what they deem to be a valueless existence. There are those who having exhausted all life's resources, and being left without hopes or desires, and almost without sensations, experience a fearful sense of desolation, a dreadful void within, which nothing can supply. To such all is vapid, barren, sunless. They covet and seek death. They

have surfeited at life's feast, and hurry themselves indecently from the board.

There are periods in society, when, from causes which are not always easy of explanation, suicide becomes unusually prevalent, so much so as to be entitled an epidemic. The state of social morals influences the number of suicides in a community; and the dissemination of speculative and mystical opinions in philosophy and religion, may so bewilder the feeble-minded and irresolute, that they will sometimes rush into the arms of death to escape the painful perplexity in which their puny intellects have become involved. The reading of books which defend suicide, have been a prolific source of that act. Madame de Staël is cited as saying, that more suicides have been caused in Germany by the reading of Goëthe's Werther, than by all the women of that country.

Suicide often owes its origin to the principle of imitation, and under such influence has occasionally so extended itself in communities, as to be regarded in the light of an epidemic. And where, from native organization, or defect of moral culture, fatal propensities exist, the danger from this source will be greatly increased. Instances of the epidemic extension of suicide from imitation, or sympathy, have been recorded both in ancient and modern times. It is related by Plutarch in his treatise on the virtue of women, that there was a time when all the girls of Miletus were killing themselves, and without any apparent cause. Those who first destroyed themselves served as examples to others, or awakened their imitative propensity, and in this way did

the fatal work spread itself among them until counteracted by the stronger influence of shame, it being ordained that their dead bodies should be exposed naked to the people. It is recorded that there was a period in the history of Lyons, when its women threw themselves in crowds into the Rhone, and without offering any reason for the act.

Several years since there appeared in the London Medical Gazette the following account of an inclination to suicide spreading itself in a remarkable manner, and, as was supposed, through the force of imitation.

"For about two months an extraordinary number of suicides, and of attempts at suicide, occurred in London; scarcely a night elapsed but one or more persons threw themselves from some bridge, or from the bank, into the Thames—for that was the favorite mode of self-destruction —till at last the police looked on such an event as a thing to be certainly expected and guarded against. The greater number of persons thus endangering their lives, exhibited no common character of insanity; had not been regarded as of unsound intellect; had no cause of utter despair; had scarcely any delusion or mistaken motive. When their lives were saved, they did not give any extravagant reason for the attempt; at most they had been vexed by some untoward circumstance, had had some domestic quarrel, or were poor, though hardly destitute. The fury of the epidemic—which affected women more than men—was increasing to a truly alarming extent, when one of the city magistrates—Sir Peter Laurie, who had probably had some advice tendered him at Bedlam, of which he is the president—deter-

mined to try the effects of punishment on all who were brought before him for attempts at suicide. The plan succeeded admirably; some were punished summarily, some were committed to take their trial for attempts at the felony of self-murder, and in a very short time—a fortnight at most—the rage had disappeared, and suicides became no more than usually common."

The writer of this article relates another remarkable instance of the same sort, and in which a similar remedy was successful. It happened at a garrison, where a strange propensity existed among the soldiers to hang themselves on lamp-posts. "Night after night were suicides of this kind committed, till the commanding officer issued a notice, that the body of the next man who put an end to his life, should be dragged round the garrison at the cart's tail, and then be buried in a ditch. His order was but once put in force, and then the epidemic ceased."

Several persons have committed suicide by throwing themselves from the gallery of the monument in London. And at one time there seemed to be a growing propensity to jump from the Leaning Tower at Pisa; three persons—as I learnt from my guide while on a visit to it—having thus put a period to their existence; on which account visitors could no longer ascend it without an authorized attendant.

A French journal—Archives Générales—records that a boy eleven years of age, being reproved by his father in the fields, went home, put on his suit of holyday clothes, procured from the cellar a bottle of holy water, and placed

it beside him, and then hung himself from the cross-beam of the bed. It appears that the uncle of this boy had a short time previously destroyed himself in a similar manner, having also first placed near him a bottle of holy water.

Even the reading of cases of suicide may sometimes call into action this principle of imitation, and lead, it may be, to fatal consequences. An instance in illustration occurred a number of years since in Philadelphia, an account of which was published at the time by Isaac Parrish, M. D., of that city. The subject was a girl in her fifteenth year, who had been carefully brought up, and whose situation in life was apparently every way agreeable. It seems that early in the morning of the day of her death, "she had held a conversation with a little girl residing in the next house, in which she mentioned having lately read in the newspaper of a man who had been unfortunate in his business, and had taken arsenic to destroy himself. She also spoke of the apothecary's shop near by, and said she frequently went there."

It appeared that two days prior to her death, she had purchased half an ounce of arsenic of a druggist in the neighborhood, for the pretended purpose of killing rats, which she had used as the instrument of her own destruction.*

It is a fact well known in respect to certain individuals, especially when of a nervous or sensitive temperament, that if the thoughts of any particular deed, calculated, from its criminal or hazardous character, to make a deep impression

* American Journal of the Medical Sciences, for November, 1837.

on the feelings, chance to be strongly awakened in the mind, they cannot be banished, but becoming more and more concentrated, a propensity, sometimes too powerful for resistance, to the commission of such deed, will actually follow. Were such an one now to become deeply affected—either from his connection with its subject, or its peculiar circumstances—by the occurrence of a suicide, the idea might continue pertinaciously to haunt his imagination, and an unconquerable inclination to the like unnatural deed be the consequence. And that murders are sometimes committed under the same mysterious and urgent impulse, is a fact too well established for denial. I remember an instance in point, which, many years since, came within my immediate knowledge. A young female, while sitting with an infant in her arms near a fire, over which hung a large kettle of boiling water, suddenly started up, and in a hurried and agitated manner ran to a distant part of the room. On asking her the reason of this, she, after a little hesitation, told me that fixing her eyes on the boiling water, it occurred to her how dreadful it would be should she by accident let the child fall into it. "On this idea crossing my mind," said she, "I instantly began to feel a propensity to throw it in, which soon grew so strong, that had I not forced myself away I must inevitably have yielded to it."

An unnatural and irresistible impulse has sometimes urged on the mother to the destruction of her own offspring. Brute animals, as sows and cats, under a like strange perversion of instinct, have been known to destroy, and even to eat their young.

"A country woman, twenty-four years of age, of a bilious sanguine temperament, of simple and regular habits, but reserved and sullen manners, had been ten days confined with her first child, when suddenly having her eyes fixed upon it, she was seized with the desire of strangling it. This idea made her shudder; she carried the infant to its cradle, and went out in order to get rid of so horrid a thought. The cries of the little being, who required nourishment, recalled her to the house. She experienced still more strongly the impulse to destroy it. She hastened away again, haunted by the dread of committing a crime of which she had such horror; she raised her eyes to heaven, and went into a church to pray.

"The unhappy mother passed the whole day in a constant struggle between the desire of taking away the life of her infant, and the dread of yielding to the impulse. She concealed, until the evening, her agitation from her confessor, a respectable old man, the first who received her confidence, who, having talked to her in a soothing manner, advised her to have recourse to medical assistance."*

The propensity to infanticide in a mother has alternated with an equally strong one to suicide; and the latter deed has been attempted to prevent the perpetration of the former, the impulse to which was felt to be invincible.

The following case was first published among other similar ones by M. Marc. It occurred in Germany, in the family of Baron Humboldt, and has the testimony of this dis-

* Prichard on Insanity, cited from Dr. Michu.

tinguished individual. The mother of the family returning home one day, met a servant who had previously given no cause of complaint, in a state of the greatest agitation. She desired to speak with her mistress alone, threw herself on her knees and entreated to be sent out of the house; giving as a reason, that whenever she undressed the little child she nursed, she was struck with the whiteness of its skin, and experienced the most irresistible desire to tear it in pieces." Esquirol relates the case of a female who was resistlessly impelled to homicide in order to shed blood, for the sight and taste of which she had exhibited a strong relish even from early life. Hence she would often eat her meat raw; and loved to cut in pieces birds or other animals which fell into her hands.

I have known persons, who on taking a sharp weapon into their hands, would almost always experience a disposition to stab those who chanced to be near them. This homicidal propensity has been experienced even in children, from eight to ten years of age.

In view of such cases as have been cited, and enough of them may be found on record, a form of insanity is now generally admitted, where the afflicted individual, without the slightest apparent disorder of the intellect, or any other discoverable mental aberration, and under a horrid conviction of the atrocity of the deed to which he is blindly impelled, and moreover devoid of all malicious intent, is attacked with a violent, and sometimes insurmountable propensity to take life; often that of some particular individual, a friend, or perhaps one bound to him by the closest ties of

kindred. This has been termed homicidal monomania, and homicidal madness, and is brought under a variety of mental disease called moral insanity; that is, where the moral feelings only become perverted, the intellect or reasoning principle being no further affected than through the influence of their morbid excitement or perversion. There is, however, another variety of homicidal madness, but whose consideration would be foreign to our present purpose, dependent on actual hallucinations, in which the individual is urged on to the commission of murder, under a fancied command from heaven, or some other similar delusion of the imagination.

This homicidal propensity of which I have been speaking is apt to be periodical, and is sometimes connected with marked bodily disorder. Thus it has been preceded by wakefulness, headache, thirst, feverishness, internal heat, constipation, colic pains, and various disorders of the stomach and bowels. A case is recorded where epilepsy, to which the patient had been subject during sixteen years, suddenly changed its character, without any apparent cause, and in place of the fits there occurred from time to time an insuperable desire to commit murder. The approach of these attacks was sometimes felt for many hours, and occasionally for a whole day, before they actually seized the individual, and on such premonition he would entreat to be tied down, to prevent him from the commission of the crime to which he was blindly impelled.

The inclination to homicide exhibits the same remarkable tendency to spread from the force of imitation, as we

have previously shown exists in that to suicide. In proof of this examples enough will be found on record. We read that the trial of Henriette Cornier, in France, for infanticide—it becoming, from its peculiar and deeply exciting circumstances, a subject of very general attention and conversation—occasioned in many respectable females a strong propensity to the same unnatural deed. Esquirol speaks of a woman brought to trial for cutting off the head of a child whom she hardly knew; and remarks that the trial being widely published, produced, through the power of imitation, many cases of homicidal monomania.

It is, in part at least, on this principle of imitation that we are to account for the repeated attempts that were once made on the lives of Louis Philippe and Queen Victoria; and the unavoidable publicity of such attempts, and the factitious consequence into which their miserable authors were often elevated, doubtless contributed to spread the disposition to them.

That unhappy instances do now and then occur, where persons acting under this insane impulse are condemned to the punishment of murder, is scarce to be questioned. Still, such morbid impulses should be admitted with a good deal of caution, or they would be unwarrantably pleaded to shield the murderer. Human justice is necessarily imperfect, and it cannot be otherwise than that some must fall the unmerited victims to its imperfection. But as laws are designed to be preventive, or are instituted for the security of the community, such impulsive homicides should be permanently confined, inasmuch as they are fully as dangerous

as the rational assassin, if rationality can be predicated of an assassin. The existence of such a morbid impulse may be reasonably inferred when there is no discoverable motive for the crime committed, and when the perpetrator of it makes no effort to escape or to screen himself from punishment. Sometimes he even appears to experience a relief from prior agitation and suffering; is composed, shows no regret, or even manifests a degree of satisfaction at the deed. We have it on the authority of Esquirol, that the impulse to murder and suicide are to be greatly feared in those who are in dread of eternal damnation, and he refers to cases in proof, recorded by Sauvages, Forestus, and Pinel.

Suicide, as previously said, is in some cases to be ascribed to a like inscrutable impulse as that which urges to homicide, and the disposition to it will at times be found to alternate, or to be strangely blended with that to homicide; and to be preceded also, or accompanied by manifest physical derangements. Striking changes, too, in the moral character and habits, are apt to forerun attempts at suicide. Thus, those who had before been social, mild, and cheerful, as a prelude to this tragic act, will often become solitary, morose, gloomy, and misanthropic. Oftentimes do they undergo a long and fearful internal struggle, subject to remissions and aggravations, against this reasonless impulse, before the preservative instinct is wholly vanquished, and the unnatural deed is consummated. "A melancholic," says Dr. Pinel, "once said to me, 'I am in prosperous circumstances, I have a wife and a child who constitute my

happiness, I cannot complain of bad health, and still I feel a horrible propensity to throw myself into the Seine.' His declaration was too fatally verified in the event."*

There is another strange impulse occasionally witnessed, and doubtless intimately allied to that which has been the subject of our attention, urging to acts of mischief—as the destruction of property—and independent of malevolent feeling, or in truth of any apparent motive. I have known persons on taking a watch into their hands, to manifest an urgent desire to dash it in pieces. And I have seen tumblers and wine-glasses actually broken under the forcible influence of such destructive propensity. Children, in like manner, will sometimes display an impulsive disposition to break their trinkets, even those with which they had been most delighted.

An irresistible propensity to burn, or to set houses on fire, without any other evidence of insanity, called incendiary monomania, and pyromania, has been admitted by some writers on forensic medicine and mental diseases. Esquirol admits, on the strength of various recorded cases, that there is a variety of monomania without delirium, marked by an instinctive desire to burn. A case is cited from Dr. Gall, of a woman, who immediately on taking any intoxicating drink began to experience an urgent impulse to set fire to some building. She had caused fourteen conflagrations before being imprisoned. One case has fallen under my observation, where a female of about sixteen years of age

* On Insanity.

twice set fire to the dwelling in which she lived, without any motive that could be detected or surmised, and without any attempt to conceal the crime or shun its punishment. This inclination, like that to suicide and homicide, has a tendency to spread through the force of imitation. In Germany, it appears, on the evidence of German physicians, that young girls from nine to twelve, fifteen, and eighteen years of age, form the larger proportion of incendiaries. The same does not hold true in France, and probably not in other countries.

I have heretofore alluded to that propensity which some people experience on looking over the brow of a precipice, to cast themselves down. It is, therefore, not improbable that some of the suicides which have been accomplished by jumping from great heights were unpremeditated, the individual having been suddenly overpowered by the force of such inclination. And may it not also be true, that some of the deaths ascribed to accidental falls, were in reality occasioned by this same insurmountable impulse?

The relative number of suicides is considerably greater in cities than in the country. In Prussia, the city have been ascertained to bear to the rural cases, a proportion of fourteen to four. M. Guerry, in an essay on the moral statistics of France, states that from whatever point we start, the relative frequency of suicide will always be found to increase as we approach Paris. And the same assertion is also made in respect to Marseilles, this town being regarded as the capital of the South. Just the reverse of this, though one would scarcely look for such a result,

he found to hold true of murders and assassinations, these consequently, in relation to the number of inhabitants, being the most, where suicides are the least numerous. The number of suicides, in proportion to the population, he ascertained to be much greater in the north than in the south of France; and that one sixteenth of all committed in France, are in the department of the Seine.

Self-destruction is more common in males than females; in France, according to Esquirol, in the proportion of three to one; and in England and America the ratio is probably about the same. In the year 1847 we have reported, for the city of New-York, thirty-two cases of suicide, twenty-eight of which were of men, and four of women. In 1848, thirty-four cases; twenty-five of men, and nine of women. In 1849, thirty-five cases; twenty-three men, and twelve women.

In regard to the temperament, the melancholic and bilious would seem to be most prone to suicide, still it may happen to any temperament; even the sanguine sometimes take off their own lives. Esquirol observes that a srcofulous habit often marks those who terminate their lives, it disposing to apathy, indifference, discouragement, ennui. In respect to the moral character of suicides, the same author remarks that there is nothing consistent; cowards and heroes, women and men, the high and the low, the criminal and the honest man, may all be driven on to self-murder.*

Suicide, although it may occur at almost any period of

* On Insanity.

life, yet there are certain ages when it would appear to be more particularly frequent. In a table given by M. Dupin, suicide is shown to happen at all ages trom ten to ninety, but to attain its greatest frequency from forty to fifty, or in middle life, diminishing as we recede from it to either extreme. This has been explained on the supposition, that then, more than at any other period, "the mind is exposed to the disturbing influence of disappointed ambition, of domestic anxiety and distress, and of other causes of chagrin and disquietude; and that it no longer possesses that elasticity or resiliency of spirit, by which it relieved itself from vexing care in more youthful years.

"The middle-aged man feels, when calamities overtake him, that he is less able than he was wont to be, to struggle against them; and the mortification at the change of his circumstances, coupled with the slender hope of regaining his former position, is too apt to prey upon his mind until he is driven to commit suicide."*

All the statistics on the subject to which I have had access, go to prove that suicide is most common in the warm, or what are generally regarded as the pleasant months of the year. M. Falret, who has written on suicide and hypochondriasis, believes that a moist, hot, and relaxing atmosphere is conducive to moral despondency, and consequently to self-murder; and it is stated in confirmation of such opinion, that in the months of June and July, 1806, sixty suicides occurred in Paris. In some of the exceeding hot

* London Medico-Churgical Review, for July, 1837.

and relaxing weather of our own summer months, especially when lasting through the night, and interfering with the needful sleep, a distressing faintness, or sinking, as it is often called, at the epigastrium, or region of the stomach, much like that attendant on acute grief, is experienced, and under the agony of which, the individual, if of a gloomy temperament, may sometimes be driven on to the deed we are considering. This feeling becomes much more intolerable when, in addition to the heat, one is subjected to the tainted air and irritating noises of dirty and crowded cities. The experience of all will teach that a high degree of temperature can be much better borne if the atmosphere be pure, than when it is contaminated with noisome effluvia. Such then as are disposed to suicide, should seek, during the hot season, the unadulterated air of the open country, and more particularly that of the sea-coast.

The months most prolific in self-destruction in France would appear to be May, June, July, and August, and, other things being the same, the instances of it become most numerous in extremely warm summers. In a report of those received during six years, into the department of the insane at the Salpêtrière, after attempting suicide, Esquirol informs us that the attempts were most frequent in the summer and spring, and the least so during the three months of autumn. He also shows that insanity most often makes its attack in the summer.

The opinion has heretofore prevailed, that in England the foggy and gloomy month of November is the one most productive of instances of self-destruction; such a con-

clusion, however, is not borne out by facts. It appears that of the suicides committed in Westminster, from 1812 to 1824, there were thirty-four in the month of June, while but twenty-two happened in the month of November. And furthermore, that in 1812, 1815, 1820 and 1824, not a case occurred in November.*

It is a prevalent notion that the variable and gloomy weather of the early period of spring, and the latter part of autumn in the more northern portions of the United States, favors in a special manner the disposition to suicide. Such opinion, however, would seem to arise rather from some fancied association between unpleasant states of the atmosphere, and unhappy moral feelings, than to be based on any careful observation of facts. On examining the bills of mortality of the city of New-York for the five years prior to the publication of the first edition of the present work, I found the instances of suicide to have been most numerous in the warm and pleasant season of the year. Thus for the months of summer, during the term specified, there were fifty-nine cases; of spring, fifty three; of autumn, forty-six, and of winter but thirty-five. May, generally a very cheerful and agreeable month in the city of New-York, gave twenty-three cases, while February, almost always bleak and dreary, afforded but seven. March and November exhibited the least number of any months, with the exception of January and February. During the two past years (1848 and 1849), according to the reports of the city in-

* Medico-Chirurgical Review, for April, 1837.

spectus, there are for the summer, twenty-four cases of self-murder: for the spring, nineteen; for the autumn, fourteen, and for the winter, twelve. The above data are, to be sure, limited, yet so far as they go, they are in agreement with the observations on the same subject made in France and England, and tending to show that the strongest propensity to self-destruction exists in the warm season.

The cases of self-murder vary materially in their relative number in different countries, as well as in the same country at different periods. In France and Germany, if statistics on the subject are to be trusted, they considerably exceed those in England. This is contrary to the belief formerly entertained, certainly by the French, who looked upon England as the country above all others where suicide prevailed, and ascribed its prevalence there to the humid and foggy atmosphere, and dismal skies. "'The English'—says Montesquieu, 'frequently destroy themselves without any apparent cause to determine them to such an act, and even in the midst of prosperity. Among the Romans suicide was the effect of education; it depended upon their customs and manner of thinking: with the English it is the effect of disease, and depending upon the physical condition of the system.' The propensity to this horrid deed, as existing independent of the ordinary powerful motives to it, such as the loss of honor or fortune, is by no means a disease peculiar to England: it is far from being of rare occurrence in France."*

* Pinel on Insanity.

In London, as near as can be ascertained, there happen annually about a hundred instances of voluntary death. And in the whole of England the proportion of cases to the number of inhabitants, is set down as about one in nine thousand. M. Guerry states the suicides registered in France from 1827 to 1830, to be six thousand nine hundred; but as many cases of this nature, either from inadequate data, or the importunity of friends, will always be classed under the deaths from accident, the actual amount must probably be much greater; and has been estimated to exceed, in the ratio of three to one, the number of murders and assassinations. In the department of the Seine, where the greatest proportion occurs, the instances have been shown to be as one in every thirty-six hundred inhabitants; and they seem to be yearly increasing in France. M. Charles Dupin has shown such increase to have been almost regularly progressive in Paris from 1829 to 1836; and later tables prove that the number of suicides throughout France is annually augmenting. Thus, in 1836 there were registered two thousand three hundred and ten cases; in 1837, two thousand four hundred and thirteen; in 1838, two thousand five hundred and fifty-six, and in 1839, two thousand seven hundred and seventeen.—In 1843, the number of suicides in France amounted to three thousand and twenty, which exceeded that of 1842 by a hundred and fifty-four; of 1841, by two hundred and six; of 1840, by two hundred and sixty-three, showing a continued progression from 1829 to 1844.

In the city of New-York, the whole number of deaths

registered from the first of January, 1805, to the first of January, 1842, a period of thirty-seven years, was 164,976, of which 809, or one out of $203\frac{748}{809}$ are brought under the head of suicide.

Suicide in New-York, so far at least as we may judge from the tables of mortality, does not, as in Paris, appear to be an increasing vice. On the contrary, it would appear to be manifestly diminishing, regarding it in relation to the population. Thus, for the five years from the first of January, 1805, to the first of January, 1810, we have registered eighty-one cases of suicide; which, compared with the mean of the city population for this term, that is, $86,071\frac{1}{2}$, gives us an average annual proportion of one case in fifty-three hundred and thirteen and a fraction of the inhabitants. Now for the same number of years, from the first of January, 1835, to the first of January, 1840, there are reported a hundred and ninety-one cases, and the mean number of the inhabitants being 291,399, we have, therefore, for this time, an average yearly ratio of one instance of self-murder to every seventy-six hundred and twenty-eight and a fraction of the population—a very manifest decrease when compared with the aforenamed period.

For the last three years, 1847, 1848, 1849, the whole number of deaths in the city of New-York was 55,480; of which number one hundred and one, or one out of $549\frac{31}{101}$ are reported under suicide.

It can scarce be doubted that in our own, as well as in other countries, the ratio of mortality from the cause under notice, is considerably greater than is shown by the reported

cases; since, for reasons which all will understand, many unquestionable cases of self-murder will be placed under the head of casualties, sudden death, visitation of God, &c. Esquirol, however, informs us that in the Paris reports are included, not barely those who are known to have destroyed themselves, whether intentionally or not, but likewise all found dead by the police, without its being certainly ascertained whether their deaths were voluntary, by assassination, or from some accidental cause. Hence he accounts for the greater relative number of reported examples of suicide in Paris than in London—the reports of the latter city embracing under suicide only such cases as afford grounds for believing life was purposely taken off.

The modes resorted to for self-destruction, vary greatly according to age, sex, and various incidental circumstances, and the strangest methods are sometimes resorted to. Monomaniacs sometimes inflict upon themselves cruelties apparently of the most dreadful nature, and oftentimes, too, without experiencing any bodily suffering from them. Women much less often have recourse to the pistol or cutting instruments than men. They more generally choose to hang, drown, poison, suffocate, or starve themselves. Suffocation by means of carbonic acid gas, from burning charcoal, is a common mode of self-destruction in France. But fashion and the principle of imitation exercise in this, as in every thing else, a remarkable influence. Sometimes two, urged on by inordinate passion, as where the course of true love does not run smooth, or by extreme misery from other causes, resolve reciprocally to destroy each other, or to termi-

nate their lives together. And there are those who, unwilling, or lacking resolution to destroy themselves by their own hands, take the life of another that they may be condemned to death. To cases of the latter description has been given the name of homicidal suicide.

The very free internal use of cold water has been regarded by some writers as an almost infallible remedy against the propensity to suicide. Esquirol, in his treatise on insanity, alludes to an account, published by Leroy d'Anvers, of the benefit of cold water as a preventive of suicide, and asserts that many facts would seem to favor the employment of such remedy. He cites the case of a highly distinguished Prussian surgeon, by the name of Théden, who, having been hypochondriacal in his youth, grew at last melancholic, with a strong propensity to the commission of suicide; but through the copious use of cold water—from twenty-four to thirty pints a day—his health was restored. He continued the habit of drinking several pints of cold water daily when at the age of eighty years. Hufeland adduces two cases in support of this remedy. Would not then the hydropathic treatment be particularly suited to those laboring under a disposition to self-murder?

Suicide is peculiar to man. We have no evidence that any other animal, even under the most painful circumstances of suffering, ever voluntarily shortens its own existence. The story of the scorpion stinging itself to death when begirt by fire, is a mere poetic fiction. This unnatural act, then, belongs to reason, or I should rather say, the perversion of reason, never to simple instinct.

Grief becomes modified, and assumes a more or less dangerous character, according to the particular nature of its origin. When caused by the decease of friends and kindred, it is, for the most part, sober, solemn, subdued; and instead of provoking, tends rather to soften and quell the sterner passions of man. And then as death belongs essentially to the scheme of nature, as every human heart is exposed to bleed under its bereavements, it is a law of our constitution that the wounds it inflicts should daily experience the sedative and healing influence of time. To the loss even of the best beloved, the feelings will ultimately get resigned, and the idea of the departed, divested of all the acuteness of its original pain, comes at last to be dwelt upon with that species of soothing melancholy which would scarce be exchanged even for the gayest social pleasures. What a happy serenity will often steal over the feelings, when, withdrawing from the busy cares and unsatisfying enjoyments of the world, we yield ourselves to the fond remembrance of those friends and kindred who rest before us from the toils and sorrows of life! And with what gladness will the mourner, his grief sobered by time's tempering power, often quit the noisy scenes of mirth and pleasure, to linger in silence and solitude at that consecrated spot where rests the object of his dearest recollections! But again, other afflictions, as disappointed ambition, ruined fortune, blighted reputation, are apt to awaken moral sufferings of a far less humble and submissive nature, and to which time less certainly extends its healing balm. Such, too, are much more frequently united with the evil passions of anger, envy,

jealousy, hatred, and consequently oftener lead to dissipation, crime, despair, and suicide. In loss of fortune, for example, especially where successful efforts cannot be made to retrieve it, the grief that follows is many times rather aggravated than appeased by the influence of time and new associations. Here the evils are ever present, ever felt. The constant deprivations and painful comparisons, the dreadful apprehensions for the future, and the agonizing sense of wounded pride, or self-humiliation, which there will be such repeated occasions to call forth, oftentimes render existence an almost unrelieved torture. How few, under such reverse of circumstances, can look back on the days of their ease and affluence but with feelings of the most bitter regret! And what cause than this has been more productive of despair and self-destruction?

"But most to him shall memory prove a curse,
Who meets capricious fortune's hard reverse;
Who once in wealth, indulged each gay desire,
While to possess, was only to require:
Glows not a flower, nor pants a vernal breeze,
As in his hour of affluence and ease,
While every luxury that the world displays,
Wounds him afresh, and tells of better days."*

Severe afflictions will oftentimes be better supported than the minor ills, or lighter trials of existence. Great misfortunes seem often to strengthen, elevate and purify

* Merry's Pains of Memory.

the soul, and are borne with manly composure, and heroic resignation; while lesser evils render us impatient and irritable, and exercise an unhappy influence on the moral character.

In youth grief generally assumes an acute and transient character; while in age it becomes more chronic and lasting. In early life we are buoyed up and sustained, and our sorrows all assuaged and shortened by the gay hopes that play upon the landscape of the future. But the mind of the aged lives almost entirely upon the recollections of the past; anticipation, with its fond promises, its bright coloring, and all its unreal mockeries, can no longer console and sustain it.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GRIEF CONCLUDED.—MENTAL DEJECTION AND EVEN DESPAIR MAY BE EXCITED BY MORBID STATES OF OUR BODILY ORGANS.—DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS, AND EVEN THE SAME AT DIFFERENT TIMES, OWING TO INCIDENTAL CIRCUMSTANCES, SHOW DIFFERENT DEGREES OF SUSCEPTIBILITY TO THE IMPRESSION BOTH OF MORAL AND PHYSICAL CAUSES.—IMPORTANCE OF A CHEERFUL AND HAPPY TEMPER TO THE HEALTH OF CHILDHOOD.—GRIEF IS APPOINTED TO ALL.—LIFE IS APT TO BE REGARDED AS HAPPY OR UNHAPPY ACCORDING TO THE FORTUNE WHICH MARKS ITS CLOSE.

MENTAL depression, as has been previously asserted, may grow out of physical as well as moral causes. The intimate relation between good spirits and good health can hardly have escaped even the most common observation. There are circumstances of the body under which the brightest fortune can bestow no happiness:—where, in the midst of every outward comfort, the heart is still heavy; and, discontented with ourselves, tired of existence, disgusted with all about us, we can find neither joy in the present, nor hope in the future.

Mental depression, or sadness, was by the ancients

ascribed to a redundancy of that humor of the body denominated by them black bile, and for which the spleen, in their fancy, served as the special reservoir. Hence have we the origin of the term melancholia, or melancholy, it being constructed of the two Greek words, μελας, *melas*, meaning black, and χολη, *cholee*, bile. And it will also appear how the word spleen came to be used as expressive of gloomy or unhappy states of the temper. In persons of the melancholic temperament, a distinctive mark of which is a dark sallow complexion, this black bile was imagined to exist in excess over the three other humors formerly assigned to the body. However erroneous, now, may be these theories, yet none the less true are the facts which they were contrived to explain. Although the hypotheses of the ancients were apt to be visionary, yet shall we generally find their observations to be well grounded. That the condition of the biliary secretion exercises a material influence upon the mind's tranquillity; that unhealthy, redundant, or obstructed bile, at the same time that it gives its gloomy tint to the complexion, may color the moral feelings with an equally dismal shade, will, in our present state of knowledge, hardly be contested. Thus, the common expression, "to look with a jaundiced eye," means, as every one must know, to view things in their sombrous aspect. We readily conclude, then, that disordered or diseased states of the liver may be comprehended among the physical causes of despondency of the mind. Thus—as will be learnt from what has been previously said—do they engender the same character of feelings of which they themselves are also begotten.

Certain morbid, though unexplainable conditions of the nervous system, as well as of other parts of the animal constitution, may in like manner cloud our moral atmosphere in the deepest gloom. That distressing state of mind termed, in medical language, melancholia, in most cases certainly, originates in, or at any rate is soon followed by a derangement of some part or parts of the vital organization. In not a few instances we are able to trace it to its primary source in the body. The dreadful sufferings of the poet Cowper, at times amounting to actual despair, from this terrible physico-moral malady, as it has been not unaptly designated, are familiar to most readers. In early life he became the subject of religious melancholy, believing himself guilty of "the unpardonable sin," and consequently that eternal punishment hereafter was his inevitable doom. So poignant, indeed, was his mental agony, that at one time he indulged serious thoughts of committing suicide. His melancholy, with occasional remissions, and sometimes aggravated into the most acute form of monomania, pursued him through the whole of his wretched existence.

Cowper appears to have exhibited from his infancy a sickly and sensitive constitution, and his native bodily infirmities and morbid predispositions were doubtless also favored by too close mental application, as well as by other circumstances to which he was exposed in early life. It is besides obvious that he must have labored more or less constantly under an unhealthy condition of the digestive organs, his fits of melancholy being generally associated with headache and giddiness. Who that has ever been afflicted with

dyspepsy but will be able to sympathize with him where, in one of his letters to Lady Haley, he says, "I rise in the morning like an infernal frog out of Acheron, covered with the ooze and mud of melancholy." Judicious medical and moral treatment united, might doubtless have done much in mitigation of the deep sufferings of this distinguished individual.

A morbid or unnaturally irritable state of the inner or mucous coat of the stomach, will oftentimes transmit such an influence to the mind as to deaden all its susceptibilities of enjoyment, and oppress it with the heaviness of despondency. Now, such an unhealthy character of this inner surface of the stomach being one of the necessary results of an habitual indulgence in exciting and inebriating drinks, the danger of a recourse to it, with a view to elevate the dejected spirits, or drown the remembrance of sorrow, will easily be understood. If the mental depression arises from a physical cause, such injudicious stimulation will be sure to augment it, and if from a moral, a physical one will thus be speedily added to it. There is, indeed, no moral gloom more deep and oppressive than that suffered by the habitually intemperate—whether in the use of distilled spirits, wine, or opium—in the intervals of their artificial excitement. In delirium tremens, a disease peculiar to the intemperate, the mind is always, even in its lightest forms, filled with the most dismal ideas, and a propensity to suicide is by no means unusual. The opium-eater, too, when not under his customary stimulus, generally experiences the most terrible mental sufferings.

There are certain affections of the brain which manifest themselves especially, and at first almost entirely, by an oppressive moral gloom. A number of years since I attended a lady with a fatal complaint of this organ, which displayed itself chiefly in such manner, the physical suffering to which it gave rise being apparently of but little moment. At first, and long before any disease was apprehended, she became exceedingly dejected, secluding herself as far as possible from all intercourse with society, and even from the presence of her most intimate friends. Her melancholy increasing, assumed at length a religious cast, and the idea that she had forfeited the favor of the Almighty, and was therefore doomed to eternal punishment, so tormented her imagination, that at one time she made an attempt at self-destruction. What was quite surprising, her mind was all the while apparently rational; she conversed freely of her feelings, admitted the absurdity of her thoughts, but at the same time declared that in spite of every endeavor they would intrude themselves upon her. At length she died, when, deep in her brain, attached to that part of it which, in anatomical language, is called *plexus choroides*, a cluster of vesicles, about thirty in number, and nearly the size of peas, was discovered. Such was the physical cause of all her poignant mental distress.

Low, marshy, malarious situations, where intermittent fevers, or agues, as they are more familiarly named, abound, through some poisonous influence which they generate, so act on the physical constitution as to weigh down all the moral energies, and fill the mind with the darkest gloom.

In observing the inhabitants of such unhealthy spots, even when they have become so seasoned to their infection as to resist the fevers, or acute effects which it produces in strangers, we cannot fail to be struck with their sallow, sickly, and emaciated appearance, and the deep melancholy of their countenances, a melancholy which the cheerful smile of more wholesome airs is rarely seen to relax. The nervous system, the liver, and other organs engaged in the function of digestion, almost always, in such situations, labor under more or less obvious derangement. And here we have yet another illustration of the remark which I have before made, namely, that the like physical states which are generated under the operation of grief, will also, when arising from other causes, tend to awaken this painful passion. Thus, the same spare, nervous, and bilious condition that distinguishes the gloomy inhabitants of the unhealthy sites to which I have just referred, is equally witnessed in those who have long suffered under severe mental afflictions.

In passing those infectious spots so common in the South of Europe, the attention is particularly attracted to the sallow and melancholy aspect of the people. We remark it as we journey over the celebrated campagna on our way to Rome. And in a still more striking manner in the Pontine marshes, so long famed for their noxious influence, on our route from Rome to Naples. In Pæstum, too, and all along the rich and fertile shores of Sicily, where the balmy airs, the placid waters, the brilliant skies, and the teeming soil would seem to invite man to joy and plenty,

every thing is shrouded in the deepest moral gloom, and the occasional forlorn inhabitant, with his dark, sickly, and desponding countenance, reminds one of some unblest spirit who has wandered into the favored fields of Elysium. Here may it truly be said,

> "Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
> A death-like silence, and a dread repose:
> Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
> Shades every flower, and darkens every green."

The insect that sports about the gaudy flowers, and regales itself on their inviting sweets, affords almost the only indication of joy in these devoted seats of malaria.

It has been suggested that Cowper's melancholy was probably favored by his long residence in the malarious atmosphere of Olney.

Frequent attacks of ague, probably by inflicting an injury on some one or more of the viscera of the abdomen, are very apt to leave the mind a prey to imaginary sorrows, imbittering the present, clouding the future, and at times leading even to despair and all its terrible consequences. Dr. Johnson tells us that he has known hundreds of people who had suffered under agues, or who had been exposed to malaria in hot and unhealthy climates, and who were harassed for years afterwards by all manner of horrors and sufferings. "I know many," says he, "who are affected with a periodical propensity to *suicide*, which generally comes on during the second digestion of food, and goes off when the process is

completed. Several instances have come within my knowledge, where individuals have been so well aware of the periodical propensity to self-murder, that they always took precautions against the means of accomplishing that horrid act, some hours before the well-known hour of its accession."*

The well-known influence, especially in sensitive individuals, of different conditions of the atmosphere on the temper of the mind, must be produced through the medium of the physical organization. There are some persons who almost uniformly feel dejected when the air is damp and thick, the alacrity of their spirits returning on its becoming dry and clear. Both ancient and modern physicians have dwelt on the remarkable effect exercised by the state of the atmosphere on our moral and intellectual feelings, and faculties. A dry and temperate climate, with a pure and clear air, is peculiarly adapted to those of a melancholy turn of mind.

The reader will now, it is to be presumed, have no difficulty in understanding that the like moral causes may, in different individuals, and even in the same at different times, call forth very unlike degrees of moral suffering. In those of a naturally sensitive temperament, or whose nervous susceptibility has been morbidly elevated through bodily infirmities, a trifling mischance may be felt as keenly as a really serious affliction in such as enjoy firmer nerves and sounder health. In one afflicted with what we call weak nerves, almost every thing that is in the least displeasing irritates

* On Change of Air.

and vexes the mind, and a life of unhappiness is the not uncommon consequence of such physical imperfection. The coloring of external things depends far more on the character of the internal constitution, than has hitherto been generally suspected in man's philosophy; and truly, therefore, has it been said, that "the good or the bad events which fortune brings upon us, are felt according to the qualities that *we* not *they* possess." We are the creatures of constitution as well as of circumstance, and with respect to our happiness, it may be said to depend even more upon the former than the latter. There are some who seem to be destined through their faulty organization, no matter what may be their fortune in regard to external goods, to be miserable; while others, on the contrary, are so physically constituted that they can scarce be otherwise than happy.

Similar observations will also apply to our physical sensations, their degree being no certain and constant measure of the absolute importance of the cause producing them. Indeed, as has been before remarked, keen moral and keen bodily sensibilities generally go together. He who feels keenly mentally, will be likely to have correspondently acute physical feelings. Now to the person concerned, of what moment is it whether a moral or corporeal source of pain be augmented, or only his susceptibility to its effect? As different material bodies, either from their peculiar nature, or through the help of incidental causes, are more or less combustible, so also are different human beings more or less excitable. And with as much reason, therefore, might we wonder that one substance should be kindled into a flame

by a little spark that causes no impression on the next, as that one man should suffer and complain under an influence to which another appears wholly indifferent. As there are ears so nicely strung as to hear sounds of such exquisite acuteness as to be wholly inaudible to others, so are there minds tuned so delicately as to perceive and feel what in others would raise no sensation, call forth no response. It is recorded of the ancient Roman ladies, that they were so exquisitely sensitive in their nervous systems, that even the odor of flowers would cause them to faint; and the same is said to be equally true of many of the modern ones; so that to

"Die of a rose in aromatic pain,"

may have some mingling of truth with its poetry. Some women are said to possess such exceedingly nice susceptibilities, that fainting will be produced by the mere touch of certain substances, as a peach, velvet, satin, &c. We are too prone, all of us, to assume our own sensibilities as a standard for those of the rest of mankind; hence is it that we so often hear expressions like the following, meant for consolation: "Why, how is it possible you can let such a little thing trouble you? I am sure I shouldn't mind it." As well might the blind man say to him that had vision, Why do you let such objects of sight disturb you? I am not affected by them. Some persons are so phlegmatic, have such thick skins, and leaden nerves, that scarce any thing will arouse their feelings; and in these, what we dignify

with the name of firmness, is in reality but the result of dulness or insensibility.

In connection with this comprehensive passion of grief, let me briefly urge the high importance of preserving in children a cheerful and happy state of temper, by indulging them in the various pleasures and diversions suited to their years. Those who are themselves, either from age or temperament, grave or sober, will not unfrequently attempt to cultivate a similar disposition in children. Such, however, is in manifest violation of the laws of the youthful constitution. Each period of life has its distinctive character and enjoyments; and gravity and sedateness, which fond parents commonly call manliness, appear to me quite as inconsistent and unbecoming in the character of childhood as puerile levity in that of age.

The young, if unwisely restrained in their appropriate amusements, or too much confined to the society of what are termed *serious* people, may experience in consequence such a dejection of spirits as to occasion a sensible injury to their health. And it should furthermore be considered, that the sports and gayeties of happy childhood call forth those various muscular actions, as laughing, shouting, running, jumping, &c., which are, in early life, so absolutely essential to the healthful development of the different bodily organs.

Again, children when exposed to neglect and unkind treatment, for to such they are far more sensible than we are prone to suspect, will not unusually grow sad and spiritless, their stomach, bowels, and nervous system becoming

enfeebled and deranged, and various other painful infirmities, and even premature decay, may sometimes owe their origin to such unhappy source.

Childhood, moreover—for what age is exempt from them?—will often have its secret troubles, preying on the spirits and undermining the health. The sorrows of this period are, to be sure, but transient in comparison with those of later life, yet they may be the occasion of no little suffering and injury to the tender and immature system while they do last. And then again many of the baleful passions, as envy and jealousy, in which grief is always more or less mingled, may agitate the human bosom long before they can be exhibited in language. Disappointed ambition, too, may wound the breast and disturb the health even in our earliest years.

Children, varying as they are known to do in their temperaments, will be affected in unequal degrees by the moral influences to which I have referred. When delicate and possessed of high nervous sensibility they will feel them far more keenly, and the danger from them will be correspondently enhanced.

Grief, let me add in conclusion of this subject, is a passion from which every human heart is destined to suffer. Affliction, in the continually recurrent vicissitudes of life, must fall upon us all; no one can hope to shun it, though the fates measure it out in very different quantities to different individuals, and to some so abundantly, that, like the Thracians, they might well weep at the birth of a child and rejoice at the funeral of their friends. Life is generally regarded as happy or unhappy according to the

fortune which marks its close. We are apt to repine against fate if adversity overtakes us near the end, however great may have been the prosperity of our preceding years. Solon, the famous lawgiver, and one of the seven wise men of Greece, counted no man happy till the manner of his death was known. "Futurity carries for every man many various and uncertain events in its bosom. He, therefore, whom Heaven blesses with success to the last, is in our estimation the happy man. But the happiness of him who still lives, and has the dangers of life to encounter, appears to us no better than that of a champion before the combat is determined, and while the crown is uncertain."* But could we justly complain of a repast where all the dishes were good and plentiful except one or two at the end? Or, on the other hand, praise it if all were poor and scanty but a few of the last? The closing scenes of Sir Walter Scott's career were indeed melancholy; nevertheless, his feast of life, as a whole, was far richer and more abundant than is allotted to most men.

* Plutarch. Life of Solon.

CHAPTER XXV.

ENVY AND JEALOUSY.—SIMILAR IN THEIR NATURE.—SECRET AND DANGEROUS IN THEIR OPERATION.—MANIFEST THEMSELVES EVEN IN INFANCY.—INJURIOUS EFFECTS OF THESE PASSIONS UPON HEALTH.—SHAME.—ITS NATURE.—THE PHENOMENA WHICH ATTEND IT.—WHEN EXTREME MAY BE FRAUGHT WITH DANGER TO HEALTH AND EVEN LIFE.—A FREQUENT SOURCE OF SUFFERING AND DISEASE IN A STATE OF SOCIETY.

Envy and jealousy are closely allied in their nature, and are oftentimes used indiscriminately for the same mental feeling. The only distinction between these two contemptible passions, is, that jealousy is felt toward a competitor who is, or we apprehend is, rising to our own rank or condition, and likely therefore to interfere either with our present or anticipated fortunes and enjoyments; whereas envy is directed toward those who already, as we conceive, enjoy something more and better, as respects internal or external gifts, than belongs to ourselves. They are each, however, attended by corresponding effects, and as is true of all malignant feelings, become equally the authors of their

own punishment, physical as well as moral. They are both secret and degrading passions, and when long and deeply indulged wear equally upon soul and body—prey like a hidden canker on the inmost sources of health and happiness. We may writhe and madden under, but dare not acknowledge the sting they infix in our bosom. "Saw of the soul" was fitly applied by an ancient writer to the wasting feeling of envy.

The manifestations of envy and jealousy, are witnessed even in infancy. "Envy," it has been said, "exerts its baneful effects on us even from our cradle. Children are observed to look sickly, and lose their flesh, if they see other children more indulged than themselves." "I have seen," says a French writer, "a jealous child, who was not yet able to speak a word, but who regarded another child who sucked with him, with a dejected countenance and an irritated eye." Esquirol observes that jealousy sometimes destroys all the delights of early life, and causes a true melancholy with delirium; and that some children, jealous of the fondness and caresses of their mother, grow pale, emaciate, and die.* In children who are educated together, this feeling of jealousy will be constantly appearing, however anxiously they may strive to dissemble it. An indiscreet partiality on the part of parents or teachers is especially apt to awaken it, and may thus produce the most unhappy effects both on the mind and body of youth.

Dr. Zimmermann observes that there are many persons

* Treatise on Insanity.

in the world who really owe their diseases to the passion of envy, and which diseases are the more dangerous, from their cause being very often unknown. "The silent, melancholy air we so often see in our patients, and the uneasiness and distress that do so much harm in diseases, very often arise from no other cause than a secret envy, which preys upon the heart, and disturbs all the operations both of the mind and body."*

There is another form of jealousy beside that noticed, I mean sexual jealousy; which, for the reason that it is often blended with the pleasurable emotion of love, I shall class under the mixed passions.

Shame consists in wounded pride or self-love, and presents itself in every degree, from that which passes away with the transient blush it raises on the cheek, to the painful mortification of spirit, to the deep and terrible sense of humiliation which prostrates all the energies of mind and body, and renders life odious. Such extremes of mortified pride, it is true, are not ordinarily included under the present passion, still if we carefully consider them, they will be found to be legitimately reducible to it.

Shame, in its primary and most commonly observed operation, affects, in a striking manner, the circulation of the extreme, or capillary vessels of the head and neck. Thus, in many persons, no sooner is it felt than the blood flies to the face, and not unusually to the neck and ears, suffusing them with a crimson and burning blush. The eyes, too, will oftentimes participate in it, and the vision in conse-

* On Experience in Physic.

quence, become partially and transiently obscured. This sudden flow of blood towards the parts mentioned, is not, as might at first seem, owing to any increase of the heart's action, but, in all ordinary cases, at least, is referrible to the immediate influence of the passion on this particular portion of the capillary circulation. Many of the other passions are also known to produce analogous local effects in the circulatory function.

Blushing takes place with remarkable facility in the young and sensitive, and in all persons of fair and delicate complexions, as in those of the sanguine temperament; and still more so if the nervous be ingrafted upon it, forming that compound temperament which has received the name of sanguineo-nervous. Here blushing will be constantly occurring, and on the most trivial occasions.

In certain disordered states of the system, owing probably to a morbid exaltation of the nervous sensibility, blushing happens far more readily than in sound health. In indigestion, for example, the face, under every little emotion, is liable to become flushed and heated.

Shame, when strongly excited, is productive of very striking phenomena, both in the mind and body. Under its sudden and aggravated influence, the memory fails, the thoughts grow confused, the sight becomes clouded, the tongue trips in its utterance, and the muscular motions are constrained and unnatural. Consider, for illustration, a bashful man making his entrance into an evening assembly. Every thing there appears to him in a maze. The lights dance and grow dim in his uncertain and suffused vision.

He perceives about him numerous individuals, but all seem mingled into one moving and indiscriminate mass. He hears voices, but they are indistinguishable, and convey no definite impressions to the mind. His face burns, his heart palpitates and flutters, and, his voluntary muscles but imperfectly obeying the will, he totters forward in the most painfully awkward manner, feeling as though all eyes were upon him, until reaching that transitorily important, and to him fearful personage, the mistress of the ceremony. He now bows like an automaton, or as if some sudden spasm had seized upon his muscles, and either says nothing—shame fixing his tongue, and sealing his lips—or if he makes out to speak, his voice is tremulous and agitated, and scarce knowing what he says, he stammers forth some most inapposite remark, just such, perhaps, as he should not have made,* and then, overwhelmed with confusion, staggers away, stumbling, perchance, over a chair or table, or running against some of the company, and is only relieved of his embarrassment on finding himself mixed with the promiscuous crowd. Now, the moral pain experienced under the circumstances described, is oftentimes of the most intense nature, and the abashed individual would be glad to transport himself to almost any other situation, and might prefer rather to face the cannon's mouth, than endure a repetition of such a distressing scene. Here, however, the pas-

* I remember a very sensible and well educated gentleman, who, at a wedding party, on paying his respects to the bride said, "I wish you many happy returns of this evening."

sion is, in most cases, but temporary in its operation, passing off with the occasion that excited it. But sometimes the individual continues to suffer under the effects of wounded self-love; remains nervous, agitated, unsocial and depressed through the evening; has no relish for the refreshments before him, and even a disturbed and sleepless night may follow. Such severe effects are more particularly apt to ensue in those whose nervous sensibility is in excess, or in the subjects of what we denominate the nervous temperament.

We witness, in a very obvious manner, the operation of the passion I am noticing, in the intercourse between the young of the opposite sexes, some of whom, especially such as have been educated in a retired manner, can hardly look at, or speak to one another without blushing the deepest scarlet. May not this sudden rush of blood toward the head also affect the brain, and thus aid in producing that confusion of thought so remarkable in those under the present emotion?

Shame, when habitually manifesting itself in the common intercourse with society, as we see it particularly in the young, is denominated bashfulness, which occasions to many persons, even through life, no trifling amount of inconvenience and suffering. There are those who can never encounter the eye of another without becoming sensibly confused. For the most part, however, this infirmity readily wears off under frequent commerce with the world, and as one extreme often follows another, the most bashful will not rarely come to be the most bold-faced and shameless.

Bashfulness and modesty, although so frequently confounded, have yet no necessary connection or relationship, and either may exist without the presence of the other. The former, or shamefacedness, as it is often called, is a weakness not unfrequently belonging to the physical constitution, and of which every one would gladly be relieved. It may be a quality of those even who are most impure in their feelings, and, when unrestrained, most immodest in their conversation. Modesty, on the other hand, pertains especially to the mind, is the subject of education, and the brightest, indeed it may almost be said, the rarest gem that adorns the human character. That awkward diffidence so frequently met with in the young of both sexes, is of a nature often very little akin to modesty.

Shame, in its ordinary operation, is not a frequent source of ill health. It is generally too transient in its workings seriously to disturb the bodily functions. Under its severe action, however, headaches, indigestions, and nervous agitations are not of rare occurrence, and even insanity has sometimes followed its aggravated influence. Injured self-love, as is proved by the reports of various lunatic asylums, is by no means an unusual cause of mental alienation. A case is related on the authority of Baron Haller, where deep shame brought on a violent fever, followed by death, in a young female. "It is related," says Dr. Zimmermann, "of Diodorus Chronos, who was considered as the most subtile logician of the time of Ptolemy Soter, that Stilpo one day in the presence of the king proposed a question to him, to which he was unable to reply;

the king willing to cover him with shame, pronounced only one part of his name and called him ονος, ass, instead of Chronos. Diodorus was so much affected at this as to die soon afterwards." Others have told the story a little differently, yet it appears from all authorities that he died of shame from not being able to answer a puzzling question put to him by the philosopher Stilpo. So painful is this passion in its extreme degree, that to escape it, the guilty mother is sometimes driven on, in opposition to the strongest instinct of her nature, to the murder of her own offspring.

Sensitive young children more often suffer under this passion of shame than has generally been considered. When strongly impressed by it, they are apt to grow dull, gloomy, sad; to lose their appetite, and become disordered in their digestive organs. The effect on the appetite is, in a particular manner, sudden and remarkable, so that any child whose feelings are at all quick and delicate may easily be shamed out of his dinner. To any family disgrace they become early and keenly sensible, and their sufferings from such source are more deep and painful than we are prone to suspect; and especially when—as is most usually the case—it is made the occasion of reproach and derision to them by their companions.

The cruel practice of ridiculing the young, making them the subject of contemptuous merriment, and more particularly of reproaching them with, or mocking their bodily imperfections, cannot be too severely censured, not only as deeply wounding their moral sensibilities, but as serving,

also, by an unavoidable consequence, to injure their physical health. It is generally known that Lord Byron, even in his earliest years, was most painfully sensitive to his lameness, and we are told that,—"One of the most striking passages in some memoranda which he has left of his early days, is where, in speaking of his own sensitiveness on the subject of his deformed foot, he described the feeling of horror and humiliation that came over him when his mother, in one of her fits of passion, called him a 'lame brat.'" Such an expression will be acknowledged by all to have been unfeeling, and injudicious in the extreme; and yet how common is it to hear parents upbraiding their children with those infirmities of which they may be the unfortunate subjects, thus awakening in their breasts the most poignant, and oftentimes injurious sense of mortification, and causing them to feel their unavoidable physical defects with all the shame and vexation of some inflicted ignominy.

Some persons would seem to be naturally very susceptible to the passion under notice; even the slightest causes are sufficient to provoke it, and in such it becomes a frequent source of suffering alike to mind and body.

As an agent in the moral discipline of the young, no passion than that of shame is more frequently, and I may add, perhaps, successfully brought into requisition; but even here it should be resorted to with a good deal of prudence, or it may tend to crush, instead of correcting the spirit, and thereby to repress the wholesome energies of the constitution. A certain measure of self-esteem is a necessary stimulus equally to our mental and bodily functions,

and we should therefore be careful that this sentiment be not too much reduced by the counterworking of shame.

I have met with several instances where a morbid and more or less lasting redness of the skin, would often follow the passion in view. Thus, under its operation, a deep blush would spread itself over the face, extending perhaps to the neck, or even down the chest, and instead of passing off, as is usual, would remain to a greater or less extent, resembling a cutaneous inflammation, sometimes even for several days. These examples were witnessed in females of a delicate complexion, and mostly of a nervous temperament. Different eruptions upon the surface, and particularly those to which a predisposition may exist, will at times be produced by this same passion.

The different secretions may become affected through the agency of shame, as through that of the other painful passions. Dr. Carpenter remarks that the odoriferous secretion of the skin, which is much more powerful in some individuals than in others, is increased under the influence of bashfulness, as well as of certain other of the mental emotions.*

Under an aggravated sense of humiliation the mind experiences unutterable anguish, and the body cannot long remain unharmed. Insanity, convulsions, and even sudden death may be the melancholy result of such painful moral condition. What feeling can be imagined more overwhelming to the proud and lofty spirit, than that of deeply morti-

* Human Physiology.

fied self-love? Under its oppressive influence existence itself is felt to be a cruel burden. How many face death in the battle-field to save themselves from the shame of cowardice, or hazard their lives in single encounter to shun the like reproach, or to wipe, as they believe, some humiliating stain from their honor!

In a state of society, where mankind are necessarily exposed to so many, and oftentimes severe mortifications, and subject to such frequent and painful vicissitudes of fortune, the suffering and disease emanating from wounded pride can scarce be adequately estimated.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MIXED PASSIONS DEFINED.—SEXUAL JEALOUSY.—ITS MORBID EFFECTS UPON MIND AND BODY.—BEARS A DIRECT PROPORTION TO THE STRENGTH OF THE LOVE ON WHICH IT IS BASED.—AVARICE.—THE PLEASURABLE AND PAINFUL FEELINGS BELONGING TO IT.—EFFECTS ON THE PHYSICAL SYSTEM.—INCREASES WITH AGE.

If we regard man in the spirit of unbiassed philosophy, we shall find little of unmingled good either in his moral or physical nature. Evil, in our limited view, would seem to be absolutely provided for in his constitution. In the very springs of his enjoyment, health, and life, flow also the elements of suffering, disease, and dissolution. Consider our appetites, the source of so much of human happiness, and so indispensable to our preservation both as individuals and a species, and what a fearful sum of sorrow, sickness, and death, shall we not find traceable to them? Look at the law of inflammation! How curious and wonderful appear the processes instituted by it for the restoration of injuries, and how essentially requisite do we find it to the safety and integrity of the vital fabric! And yet out of this very law, the wisdom and benevolence of

whose final purpose have afforded so frequent a theme to the medical philosopher, will be found to originate the most agonizing and fatal maladies that afflict our race. Indeed, nature would seem to employ inflammation as her favorite agent in the violent destruction of human life.

Those passions now, with which we have been hitherto engaged, although brought under the classes of pleasurable and painful, yet seldom, if ever, can we expect to meet perfectly pure, or wholly unmingled with each other. Rarely, and perhaps I may say never, does it happen to us, under any circumstances, to be completely blessed, but the good we enjoy must constantly be purchased at the price of some evil.

> "Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,
> The source of evil one, and one of good:
> From these the cup of mortal man he fills,
> Blessings to these, to those distributes ills;
> To most he mingles both . . . . .
> The happiest taste not happiness sincere,
> But find the cordial draught is dash'd with care."*

Scarcely indeed can even the most prosperous count upon a single moment of unsullied felicity. Or, supposing a passion to be in the first instance purely pleasurable, yet is it sure almost immediately to engender some other of an opposite shade, our very joys becoming the parents of our sorrows. The elation of hope alternates with the depression

* Iliad.

of fear, the delights of love beget the pangs of jealousy, and out of even our happiest fortunes there will almost necessarily grow some apprehension of change. Thus Othello, when under the full fruition of all his heart's desires, exclaims,

> "If it were now to die
> 'Twere now to be most happy; for I *fear*,
> My soul hath her content so absolute,
> That not another comfort like to this
> Succeeds in unknown fate."

So, too, may it be said of our painful passions,—seldom are they altogether unrelieved by those of a contrary nature. Through even the darkest night of the soul some gladdening beams may penetrate. Hope, at least, in our very worst conditions, seldom entirely forsakes us. Nature diverts us with it amid the pains and disappointments of life, as the mother soothes her child, under the bitter drug or the surgeon's knife, by holding before it some gilded trinket. Although each day is betraying its futility, yet does its false light continue to allure and cheer us, often even to the hour of our dissolution. We read in Eastern allegory of a traveller, who in his flight from a dragon that he discovered pursuing him, rushed over a fearful precipice; but was hindered in his fall by seizing upon a slender twig. Sustained by such weak and uncertain support,—the dragon glaring upon him from above, the deadly abyss yawning for him below,—looking upward he saw some tempting fruit, when, forgetful of the impendent dangers, he plucked and

devoured it. And is it not oftentimes the same with us in life? With evils and dangers in pursuit, and terrors and destruction before, do we not,—held by the equally frail and treacherous support of hope,—continue to pluck, and feast ourselves with the joys of existence? Divested of the principle of hope, it is doubtful if the human race, with its present constitution, could possibly have been preserved. Even in the severest extremities, it still holds us to existence.

> "To be worst,
> The lowest, and most dejected thing of fortune,
> Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear."

It will be understood, then, that particular emotions are assigned to the classes pleasurable and painful, not that they are absolutely unmingled, but because pain or pleasure is their obviously predominant and striking feature. Now in this third class, or what we designate as mixed, both the happy and unhappy passions are distinctly blended, and each, even to the most superficial observation, is rendered plainly apparent.

The deleterious consequences, proceeding from the mixed emotions, will, it scarce need be said, have a direct relation to the preponderance of the unhappy feelings which enter into their constitution. And their operation may, furthermore, be greatly aggravated by sudden contrasts; adverse passions, when alternating or contending, always serving to heighten one another, and thus to produce the most agitating and dangerous effects. The fear, anger, and hate,

for example, of sexual jealousy, are each enhanced by the love with which they alternate, or are so paradoxically united. Of the hazard of awakening in the mind disturbed by one strong emotion, another of an opposite character, I have before had occasion to speak. We can perceive, therefore, why it is that a knowledge of the very worst will generally be better borne than an anxious incertitude, under which the feelings are constantly tossed and racked by the painful struggles and oppositions of hope and fear.

We will proceed now to illustrate the mixed passions by a concise account of sexual jealousy, avarice, and ambition.

Sexual Jealousy, an exceedingly complicated passion, is based on the pleasurable emotion of love, and while this and hope continue blended in its constitution, it will properly come under the present division of mixed passions. But when these feelings have become extinguished, and despair, wounded self-love, hate, and a burning revenge, alone occupy the heart, then will its place be with the painful passions.

Sexual jealousy combining within itself a variety of contending emotions, as hope, fear, anger, suspicion, love, when extreme, few passions are more agitating and harassing, more blinding to the eye of common sense, more perversive of the judgment and moral feelings, or tend to more fearful results. Under its unhappy influence the appetite fails, the flesh wastes, the complexion grows sallow, often tinted with a greenish shade, and the sleep becomes broken, disturbed, painful, filled with all sorts of vague and

dismal imaginings, and, in extravagant cases, is almost wholly interrupted. Well, therefore, might Iago exclaim, when he had raised in the breast of Othello a doubt of Desdemona's faith,

> "Not poppy, nor mandragora,
> Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
> Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
> Which thou ow'dst yesterday."

The nervous system also experiences violent perturbations, and even a state of frenzy sometimes supervenes, and life itself is jeoparded. That it becomes a not unfrequent cause of settled insanity, we have abundant evidence in the reports of the lunatic asylums of all countries. This species of jealousy calls up the most terrible and dangerous passions of the heart, and frequently leads to the most cruel and unnatural acts. It often turns even the gentlest nature into that of a fury, or demon. Let every one beware of it. Its breath sheds a deeper, a deadlier venom than that of the fabled dragon of old. If it once enters a dwelling, all peace, all joy, flee for ever before its baleful presence.

> "O, beware, my lord, of jealousy;
> It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock
> The meat it feeds on. That cuckold lives in bliss,
> Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger;
> But, O, what damned minutes tells he o'er,
> Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!"

Other things being the same, sexual jealousy will bear a direct proportion to the intensity of the love upon which it is based. It is where the latter emotion is deepest, that the former becomes most destructive. Hence may it be understood why the opposite sexes are so fond of exciting the feeling in question, by a thousand little artifices, in the breasts of each other, it being a test of their affection, and flattering, consequently, to that strongest of all sentiments, self-love.

Avarice is another passion manifestly reducible to the class I am now examining. The pleasure of avarice consists in accumulating and hoarding up treasures; in computing and gloating over them; in a feeling of the power which they bestow; and, likewise, in the consciousness of the possession of the means, though there be no disposition to employ them for the purposes of enjoyment; and finally, it may be presumed, in the anticipation of future gratifications they are to purchase, since even in the most inveterate miser there is probably a sort of vague looking forward to the time when his superfluous stores will be brought into use, to administer, in some way, to the indulgence of his wants, and the consequent promotion of his happiness, although such a period never arrives.

The painful feelings mingled in avarice, are gloomy apprehensions for the safety of its treasures, with uneasy forebodings of exaggerated ills which would result from their privation. Hence, fear, suspicion, and anxiety, serve to counterbalance the pleasure arising from the contemplation and consciousness of possession of the soul's idol.

And then, in addition, there is the unhappiness accompanying every little expenditure, even for the common wants of life, — the misery, oftentimes truly distressing, of parting with even a fraction of that wealth to which the soul is so indissolubly bound.

There are numerous passions of a far more guilty character, and whose consequences to the individual and to society are vastly more pernicious, but few are there more despicable, more debasing, more destructive of every sentiment which refines and elevates our nature, than avarice. Nothing noble, nothing honorable can ever associate with the sordid slave of this unworthy feeling. It chills and degrades the spirit, freezes every generous affection, breaks every social relation, every tie of friendship and kindred, and renders the heart as dead to every human sympathy as the inanimate mass it worships. Gold is its friend, its mistress, its god.

In respect to the physical system, avarice lessens the healthful vigor of the heart, and reduces the energy of all the important functions of the economy. Under its noxious influence, the cheek turns pale, the skin becomes prematurely wrinkled, and the whole frame appears to contract, to meet, as it were, the littleness of its penurious soul. Nothing, in short, is expanded either in mind or body in the covetous man, but he seems to be constantly receding from all about him, and shrinking within the compass of his own mean and narrow spirit. He denies himself not merely the pleasures but the ordinary comforts of existence; turns away from the bounties which nature has spread around him, and even

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starves himself in the midst of plenty, that he may feast his imagination on his useless hoards. The extent to which this sordid passion has in some instances reached, would appear almost incredible. An old writer tells of a miser, who, during a famine, sold a mouse for two hundred pence, and starved with the money in his pocket.

Avarice does not, like most other passions, diminish with the advance of life, but, on the contrary, seems disposed to acquire more and more strength in proportion as that term draws near when wealth can be of no more account than the dust to which the withered body is about to return. Old age and covetousness have become proverbially associated. Not unfrequently, indeed, will this sordid inclination remain active even to the end, outliving every other feeling, and gold be the last thing that can cheer the languid sight, or raise the palsied touch. Thus have we examples of misers who have died in the dark to save the cost of a candle. Fielding tells us of a miser who comforted himself on his death-bed "by making a crafty and advantageous bargain concerning his ensuing funeral, with an undertaker who had married his only child." I well remember an old man, who —having reached the extremity of his existence, and in a state of torpor and apathy to all around him—would almost always be aroused, and a gleam of interest be lighted up in his dim eye, by the jingling of money.

Even the sudden and most appalling aspect of death will not always banish this base sentiment from the heart. Thus, in cases of shipwreck, persons have so overloaded themselves with gold, as to sink at once under its heavy

pressure. In excavating Pompeii, a skeleton was found with its bony fingers firmly clutched round a parcel of money. "When,"—says Dr. Brown, speaking of the miser,—"when the relations, or other expectant heirs, gather around his couch, not to comfort, nor even to seem to comfort, but to await, in decent mimicry of solemn attendance, that moment which they rejoice to see approaching, the dying eye can still send a jealous glance to the *coffer*, near which it trembles to see, though it scarcely sees, so many human forms assembled, and that feeling of jealous agony, which follows, and outlasts the obscure vision of floating forms that are scarcely remembered, is at once the last misery, and the last consciousness of life."*

Although avarice can scarcely be set down as a very prolific source of disease, still, the painful feelings mingling with it when extravagant, must exercise a more or less morbid and depressing influence on the energies of life. The countenance of the miser is almost uniformly pale and contracted, his body spare, and his temper prone to be gloomy, irritable, and suspicious,—conditions rarely going with a perfect and healthful action of the different bodily functions. The miser is, moreover, especially as age advances, very apt to fall into that diseased and painful state of the mind in which the imagination is continually haunted by the distressing apprehension of future penury and want. This is a variety of monomania, and certainly a strange one, inasmuch as it almost always happens to those possessed of

* Philosophy of the Human Mind.

means in abundance to secure them against the remotest prospect of such danger; and usually, also, at an advanced period of life, when, in the ordinary course of nature, wealth must soon become valueless.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MIXED PASSIONS CONCLUDED. — AMBITION. — GENERAL CONSIDERATION OF IT. — ITS NATURE DEFINED. — EVILS GROWING OUT OF IT WHEN INORDINATE. — THE PECULIAR POLITICAL, AS WELL AS OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO THE GROWTH OF AMBITION. — HEALTH AND HAPPINESS MOST OFTEN FOUND ASSOCIATED WITH THE GOLDEN MEAN.

AMBITION, although we are so constantly admonished of its vanity and danger, would seem to acquire new force — additional motives being offered to it — with the moral and intellectual advancement of society. The moralist who writes, and the preacher who declaims, against it, could they rightly analyze the motives which actuate them, would probably find this passion to be one of the most efficient; — that their endeavors are often stimulated less by a desire for the good, than the applause of mankind. The busy efforts of philanthropy are oftentimes incited mainly by the spur of ambition. Humility even, paradoxical as it may appear, will not unfrequently have its secret sources in the same passion; and religion itself, stretching

its ambitious views beyond the present life, aspires to glorious distinctions in a world of spirits.

Ambition—such is its tenacity and power—will often cling to, and buoy us up under the severest trials, amid bodily sufferings of the most aggravated character, quitting us only with the last conscious throb of our being. Nerved by his desire of glory, the Indian endures without a murmur all the most cunningly devised tortures of his enemies; the martyr experiences the same animating influence amid the fires which persecution has lighted for him; and the felon on the scaffold, while his confused vision wanders over the assembled multitude below him, becomes stimulated by a hero's pride, and dies with a hero's fortitude.

With the evils and sufferings of ambition, both to individuals and society, every one must be familiar, for all history is little else than a record of its enormities and penalties. In its extreme degree it would appear to swallow up, or, at least, to render subservient to itself, all other passions of the soul. It vanquishes even the fear of death; and love itself, however ardent, must submit to its more potent sway. Nor can it be bounded by the narrow limits of our existence, but there is an eager longing that our names and deeds may still live in the remembrance of posterity, when our forgotten bodies have returned to the elements whence they sprung.

"Of all the follies of the world," says Montaigne, "that which is most universally received, is the solicitude for reputation and glory, which we are fond of to that degree, as to abandon riches, peace, life, and health, which are

effectual and substantial goods, to pursue this vain phantom, this mere echo, that has neither body nor hold to be taken of it. And of all the unreasonable humors of men, it seems that this continues longer, even with philosophers themselves, than any other, and that they have the most ado to disengage themselves from this, as the most resty and obstinate of all human follies." *

We may define ambition to be that anxious aspiration, so characteristic of the human species, to rise above our respective stations, or to attain to something loftier, and, as fancy pictures, better than what we now enjoy. It implies, therefore, dissatisfaction with the present, mingled, generally, with more or less elating anticipations for the future. Strictly speaking, it embraces emulation, or the desire which we all feel of a favorable estimation of self, when measured with our compeers. Pride and self-love, then, enter essentially into its constitution, and the rivalships and competitions which necessarily grow out of it, almost always lead to the painful feelings of envy and jealousy.

This passion, consisting, as it does, especially in the wish for superiority over our own particular class, or those with whom we are brought into more immediate comparison, must operate alike upon all ranks of society. Hence, servants pant for distinction above servants, just as kings do for pre-eminence over kings. And the tailor who excels all others of his craft in fitting a coat to a dandy's

* Essays.

back, may feel his ambition as highly gratified as the proud statesman who has equally outstripped all his competitors.

"Philosophy," says Doctor Paley, "smiles at the contempt with which the rich and great speak of the petty strifes and competitions of the poor; not reflecting that these strifes and competitions are just as reasonable as their own, and the pleasure which success affords, the same." *

The aims of ambition will differ, and its aspects become essentially modified, according to the temperament, education, and habits of its individual subjects, and the various incidental circumstances under which they may chance to exist. Thus, wealth, literary, political, and military fame, or even mere brute strength,—in short, almost any thing that can distinguish us from the crowd, may, under different influences, become the object of our aspirations. The cynics, or dog-philosophers, while they ridiculed those who were ambitious of wealth and worldly display, were themselves equally ostentatious of their poverty,—equally proud of their filth and raggedness. Hence the remark of Socrates to the leader of this sect,—"Antisthenes, I see thy vanity through the holes of thy coat." And Diogenes, so distinguished among these currish philosophers, was probably as much the votary of ambition, while snarling in his dirty tub, as Alexander, when directing his mighty armies; and on making his celebrated reply to the friendly

* Moral Philosophy.

inquiry of the latter, who had condescended to visit him, "If there was any thing he could serve him in?" "Only stand out of my sunshine," felt, it is not unlikely, as much pride in his singularity and impudence, as did his illustrious and more courteous guest, in all the glory of his conquering power. Well, therefore, might the ambitious monarch exclaim,—"Were I not Alexander, I should wish to be Diogenes." And then, again, so much may the bent of ambition depend on adventitious circumstances, that he who, under some conditions, would pant to excel as a robber, might, under others, be full as eager for excellence as a saint.

> "The fiery soul abhorr'd in Catiline,
> In Decius charms, in Curtius is divine;
> The same ambition can destroy or save,
> And makes a patriot as it makes a knave."

Among the worst evils of inordinate ambition is its continual restlessness: its dissatisfaction with the present, and its implacable longings for the future. Honors are no sooner achieved than their vanity becomes apparent, and they are contemned, while those which are not possessed hold out the only promise of enjoyment. The ardor of love—and the same is true of most other strong passions—will be quenched, or at least weakened, by fruition; but the appetite of ambition can never be satiated, feeding serves only to aggravate its hunger. No sooner, therefore, has the ambitious man gained one eminence, than another and yet loftier swells upon his view, and with fresh and more eager efforts and de-

sires he strains forward to reach its summit. And so does he go on, surmounting height after height, still looking and laboring upward, until he has climbed to the utmost pinnacle. But alas! even here he meets but disappointment and unrest. The same ambitious cravings continue to haunt and agitate him, and, deprived of the cheering influence of hope, and the animating excitement attendant on the struggles of pursuit, he is even less content and less happy than on first starting in the race. He has been chasing, as he finds, a phantom; been laboring but to labor; has enjoyed no hour of pleasing respite, and has in the end, perhaps, found only a hell in the imaginary paradise he had framed to himself. Though the rich fruit has ever seemed to wave above him, and the refreshing stream to play before him, yet has he been doomed to an unceasing and a quenchless thirst.

It is certainly a great pity that we do not strive rather for a contented spirit,—to enjoy the good already in possession, instead of wasting ourselves in the pursuit of things which owe all their beauty to the distance at which they are removed from us.

Cineas, the friend and counsellor of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, with a view to wean the latter from his ambitious designs on Italy, drew him artfully into the following conversation: "The Romans have the reputation of being excellent soldiers, and have the command of many warlike nations; if it please Heaven that we conquer them, what use, sir, shall we make of our victory?" "Cineas," replied the king, "your question answers itself. When the Romans are

once subdued, there is no town, whether Greek or Barbarian, in all the country, that will dare oppose us; but we shall immediately be masters of all Italy, whose greatness, power and importance, no man knows better than you." Cineas having paused a moment, continued, "But after we have conquered Italy, what shall we do next, sir?" Pyrrhus, not yet perceiving his drift, replied, "There is Sicily very near, and stretches out her arms to receive us, a fruitful and populous island, and easy to be taken. For Agathocles was no sooner gone, than faction and anarchy prevailed among her cities, and every thing is kept in confusion by her turbulent demagogues." "What you say, my prince," returned Cineas, "is very probable; but is the taking of Sicily to conclude our expeditions?" "Far from it," answered Pyrrhus, "for if Heaven grant us success in this, that success shall only be the prelude to greater things. Who can forbear Lybia and Carthage, then within reach, which Agathocles, even when he fled in a clandestine manner from Syracuse, and crossed the sea with a few ships only, had almost made himself master of? And when we have made such conquests, who can pretend to say that any of our enemies, who are now so insolent, will think of resisting us?" "To be sure," said Cineas, "they will not; for it is clear that so much power will enable you to recover Macedonia, and to establish yourself uncontested sovereign of Greece. But when we have conquered all, what are we to do then?" "Why, then, my friend," said Pyrrhus, laughing, "we will take our ease, and drink and be merry." Cineas, having brought him thus far, replied, "And what hinders us from

drinking and taking our ease now, when we have already those things in our hands, at which we propose to arrive through seas of blood, through infinite toils and dangers, through innumerable calamities, which we must both cause and suffer?"*

The passion under notice, existing as it does, to a greater or less extent, in every human breast, would seem to be a necessary element in our moral constitution. Some, even, of the inferior animals, exhibit undeniable manifestations of its influence. It cannot, therefore, nor is it desirable that it should be altogether suppressed. When moderate, and wisely regulated, it may prove an agreeable and wholesome stimulus alike to the mental and physical economy, and contributes in various ways both to individual and social good.

It is when ambition is extravagant, and especially if it be at the same time ill-directed, that we witness all its pernicious effects on mind and body. He who has once surrendered himself to the thraldom of this passion, may bid farewell to that contentment and tranquillity of the soul, in which exist the purest elements of happiness. The heart thus enslaved will be ever agitated by the harassing contentions of hope and fear, and if success is unequal to the wishes and anticipations—and how seldom is it otherwise?—then come the noxious feelings of disappointment and regret; humiliation, envy, jealousy, and frequently even despair, infusing their poison into all the healthful springs of life. The sallow and anxious brow, the dismal train of

* Plutarch's Lives.

dyspeptic and nervous symptoms, and the numerous affections of the heart and brain so often witnessed in the aspirants for literary, political, or professional fame, proceed not rarely from the painful workings of the passion under examination. And could we always trace out the secret causes of ill health and premature decay, disappointed ambition would probably be discovered to hold a far more prominent place among them than has hitherto been surmised. How few are adequate, either in their moral or physical strength, to bear up under the blighting of high-reaching expectations, and yet of how many is such the doom! In those, especially, of delicate and susceptive constitutions, the powers of life may soon yield to the disheartening influence of the painful mortification which is the inevitable consequence.

It is a mistake, I conceive, in our education, that the principle of ambition is so early and assiduously instilled into, and urged upon us as the grand moving power of our lives—that great men, not happy ones, are held up as patterns for our imitation. In truth, from the first dawning of our reasoning powers, there is a continued endeavor to nurture within us an aspiring, and consequently discontented spirit, and, by a strange contradiction, while the preacher and the moralist are constantly admonishing us of the vanity and danger of the pursuits of ambition.

The ambition, it may here be observed, which aims at moral excellence, or whose ends are generous and benevolent, serving to promote, instead of interfering with the success and advancement of others, and meeting, conse-

quently, but little opposition or rivalship, will enjoy a preponderance of the pleasurable feelings, and will therefore be salutary in its effects alike on mind and body.

Our own peculiar circumstances as a people are especially favorable to the growth of ambition. Hardly as yet emerged from our infancy, with a widely extended territory, and an almost unparalleled national increase, with so much to be accomplished, so much in anticipation, every one finds some part to act; every one sees bright visions in the future, and every one therefore becomes inflated with a proud sense of his individual importance. The field of advancement, moreover, is alike free to all, our democratical institutions inviting each citizen, however subordinate may be his station, to join in the pursuit of whatever distinctions our forms of society can bestow. Hence, as might be expected, the demon of unrest, the luckless offspring of ambition, haunts us all, agitating our breasts with discontent, and racking us with the constant and wearing anxiety of what we call *bettering* our condition. The servant is dissatisfied as a servant; his heart is not in his vocation, but pants for some other calling of a less humble sort. And so it is through all other ranks—with the mechanic, the trader, the professional man—all are equally restless, all are straining for elevations beyond what they already enjoy; and thus do we go on toiling anxiously in the chase, still hurrying forward toward some visionary goal, unmindful of the fruits and flowers in our path, until death administers the only sure opiate to our peaceless souls. That the people of every country are, in a greater or less measure, the subjects of

ambition, and desirous in some way of advancing their fortunes, it is not our purpose to deny; yet, for the reasons stated, the foregoing remarks are particularly applicable to ourselves. These same political circumstances, too, which so conduce to the increase of ambition, render us extremely liable to great and sudden vicissitudes of fortune, which are always detrimental both to moral and physical health.

Mental occupation—some determinate and animating object of endeavor, is, as I have previously said, essential to the attainment of what we are all seeking—I mean happiness. Yet if the mind is not allowed its needful intervals of relaxation and recreation,—if its objects of desire are prosecuted with an unintermitting toil and anxiety, then will this great aim of our being assuredly fail us. Now, may it not reasonably be doubted if our own citizens, under their eager covetings for riches and preferment, under their exhausting and almost unrelieved confinement to business, do not mistake the true road to happiness? Absorbed in their ardent struggles for the means, do they not lose sight of their important ends? As a people we certainly exhibit but little of that quiet serenity of temper, which of all earthly blessings is the most to be desired.

When loitering in the streets of Naples I have contemplated the half-naked and houseless lazzaroni, basking in indolent content in the gay sunshine of their delicious climate, or devouring with eager gratification the scant and homely fare of uncertain charity, and watched their mirthful faces, and heard their merry laugh, and then in fancy have contrasted them with our own well-provided citizens, with

their hurried step and care-worn countenances, or at their plenteous tables, dispatching their meals scarce chewed or even tasted—every where haunted by their restless and ambitious desires—I could not but ask myself, Are *we* really any nearer the great purpose of our existence than these heedless beggars in their "loop'd and window'd raggedness?" and when each have attained the final goal, is it impossible even that the latter may have actually had the advantage in the sum total of human enjoyment? The casual pains of cold and hunger which make up their chief suffering, will hardly compare with those which continually agitate the discontented breast.

To the force of the same passion, to the uneasy cravings of ambition is it that the rash speculations so common among us, and so destructive to peace of mind and health of body, are in a great measure to be ascribed. This commercial gambling—for such it may be rightly named—will oftentimes be even more widely ruinous in its consequences than that more humble sort to which our moral laws affix a penalty of so deep disgrace. For while the private gamester trusts to the fall of a die, or the turn of a card, but his own gold, the gambler on change risks on the hazards of the market, not what belongs to himself only, but, many times, the fortunes of those who had reposed their confidence in his integrity, and may thus involve in one common ruin whole circles of kindred and friends. And yet such are the ethics of social life, that whilst the latter is respected, courted, and elevated to high places, civil and religious, the former is shut out of all virtuous society.

No truth, perhaps, has been more generally enforced and admitted, both by ancient and modern wisdom, while none has received less regard in practice, than that happiness is equally removed from either extreme of fortune,—that health and enjoyment are most frequently found associated with the *aurea mediocritas*, the golden mean.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE IMAGINATION WHEN NOT PROPERLY DISCIPLINED AND RESTRAINED, BECOMES A SOURCE BOTH OF MORAL AND PHYSICAL DISORDER.—CAUSES OF A DISORDERLY IMAGINATION.—EROTIC MELANCHOLY OR MONOMANIA.—HAS ITS ORIGIN OFTEN IN AN UNCONTROLLED AND ROMANTIC IMAGINATION, AND IS FREQUENTLY EXCITED BY AN UNREASONABLE INDULGENCE IN NOVEL READING.—ITS DESCRIPTION.—ITS MOST COMMON SUBJECTS.—THE NERVOUS TEMPERAMENT.—SECURITIES AGAINST A MORBID ASCENDENCY OF THE IMAGINATION, AND ITS CONSEQUENT NERVOUS INFIRMITIES.

An ill-regulated and unbridled imagination, united, as it always is, with strong and varying emotions, must be inimical to the health both of body and mind. In respect to their consequences, it is of little moment whether the passions have their incentive in the creations of fancy, or the sterner truths of reality.

"It was undoubtedly the intention of nature," says Professor Stewart, "that the objects of perception should produce much stronger impressions on the mind than its own operations. And, accordingly, they always do so, when proper care has been taken, in early life, to exercise the

different principles of our constitution. But it is possible, by long habits of solitary reflection, to reverse this order of things, and to weaken the attention to sensible objects to so great a degree, as to leave the conduct almost wholly under the influence of imagination. Removed to a distance from society, and from the pursuits of life, when we have been long accustomed to converse with our own thoughts, and have found our activity gratified by intellectual exertions, which afford scope to all our powers and affections, without exposing us to the inconveniences resulting from the bustle of the world, we are apt to contract an unnatural predilection for meditation, and to lose all interest in external occurrences. In such a situation, too, the mind gradually loses that command which education, when properly conducted, gives it over the train of its ideas; till at length the most extravagant dreams of imagination acquire as powerful an influence in exciting all its passions, as if they were realities."*

There is a class of individuals always to be met with in society, who, unsatisfied with the tameness of real life, create for themselves new conditions, and please themselves with impossible delights in the worlds of imagination; who riot amid the false hopes and unnatural joys of entrancing day-dreams, till at last the unreal acquires absolute dominion over their minds—till wholesome truth is sacrificed to sickly mockeries:

"And nothing is,
But what is not."

* Philosophy of the Human Mind.

Such persons are apt to be characterized by a certain sentimental melancholy, mingled with a deep and romantic enthusiasm; by morbidly refined sensibilities; an impassioned and fervid, though often disorderly imagination; and are not unfrequently distinguished by brilliant mental endowments, particularly by a genius for poetry, whose license is to range at discretion through fancy's boundless and enchanting fields. They are prone, also, to become misanthropical and secluded in their feelings and habits.

There are few of us, indeed, even of the most sober imaginations, but must sometimes have experienced the ecstasy of revelling among the delights of the unreal; of forgetting our own dull and unsatisfying sphere, and indulging in dreams of unearthly felicity—dreams, alas! which must soon be dispelled by some stern reality; leaving us, like the child who has been enrapt by some theatrical fairy show, only the more dissatisfied with our actual condition.

Of Rousseau, who affords a strong example of the unhealthy character of the imagination I am describing, and of the unhappy nervous infirmities which so constantly go with it, Madame de Staël says, "He dreamed rather than existed, and the events of his life might be said more properly to have passed in his mind than without him." Picturing his own morbid excess of sensibility, when at Vevay, on the banks of the Lake of Geneva, he says, "My heart rushed with ardor from my bosom into a thousand innocent felicities; melting to tenderness, I sighed and wept like a child. How frequently, stopping to indulge my feelings, and seating myself on a piece of broken rock, did I amuse myself with seeing my tears drop into the stream!"

The description which Byron has given of Manfred in his youth, was designed to be one of himself, and affords a true picture of the imaginative temper of mind with which we are engaged:

"My spirit walk'd not with the souls of men,
Nor look'd upon the earth with human eyes;
The thirst of their ambition was not mine;
The aim of their existence was not mine.
My joys, my griefs, my passions, and my powers,
Made me a stranger. Though I wore the form,
I had no sympathy with breathing flesh.
My joy was in the wilderness—to breathe
The difficult air of the iced mountain's top,
Where the birds dare not build, nor insect's wing
Flit o'er the herbless granite; . . . . . or
To follow through the night the moving moon,
The stars, and their development; or catch
The dazzling lightnings till my eyes grew dim;
Or to look listening on the scatter'd leaves,
While autumn winds were at their evening song.
These were my pastimes—and to be alone;
For if the beings, of whom I was one—
Hating to be so—cross'd me in my path,
I felt myself degraded back to them,
And was all clay again."

Sir Walter Scott has given us, in the character of Wilfrid, in his poem of Rokeby, a well-drawn picture of this same imaginative temperament.

Such a disposition of the imagination may have its origin in a variety of causes; as native peculiarity of tempera-

ment, delicate health, injudicious education, habits of solitary reflection, and in the young especially, will oftentimes be the fruit of an extravagant indulgence in the works of fictitious narrative; too many of which abound in that mawkish sentimentality, so peculiarly unfriendly to moral and intellectual health. It appears that Rousseau was, in his youth, a great reader of novels. In sensitive and secluded individuals, this sort of reading, when carried to excess, has sometimes so wrought upon and disturbed the fancy as to bring on actual insanity. Esquirol refers the frequency of insanity among the women of France, to the vices of their education; as the preference given to mere ornamental acquirements, the reading of romances, which incites in the mind a precocious activity and premature desires, with the imagination of excellences never to be realized—the frequenting of theatrical exhibitions, and society, and the abuse of music. He records a number of cases of insanity which were referred to the reading of romances. Erotic melancholy, or monomania, is the form of insanity most usual from this cause. The history of the renowned Knight of La Mancha is doubtless but an exaggerated picture of cases of hallucination, which in those days were frequently happening from the general passion for tales of chivalry and romance. "The high-toned and marvellous stories," says Dr. Good, "of La Morte d'Arthur, Guy of Warwick, Amadis of Gaul, the Seven Champions of Christendom, and the Mirror of Knighthood, the splendid and agitating alternanations of magicians, enchanted castles, dragons and giants, redoubtable combatants, imprisoned damsels, melting min-

strelsy, tilts and tournaments, and all the magnificent imagery of the same kind, that so peculiarly distinguished the reign of Elizabeth, became a very frequent source of permanent hallucination."*

The chivalrous spirit which followed the crusades greatly multiplied erotic melancholy. But as this form of mental aberration is apt to be associated with a disorderly and romantic imagination, and to be excited by an unreasonable indulgence in novel-reading, a few words of explanation in regard to it, will, I trust, not be deemed irrelevant to my present subject. Erotic monomania, or erotomania, as some writers have termed it, means literally love-madness. It is implied in common language by the terms *love-crazed*, or *love-cracked*. Love may consist in a sort of sentimental melancholy, which delights in solitude and soft reveries. Such does not reach insanity, although it oftentimes comes close upon its confines. Shakspeare, however, classes all lovers with lunatics.

> "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
> Are of imagination all compact:
> One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
> That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
> Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt."

But it is when the passion is so extravagant as to bring the judgment quite under its subjection, to absorb all

* Study of Medicine.

other feelings, that it becomes unquestionably a mental disease. The assertion is doubtless true, that nearly all forms of insanity have their primitive type in some of the passions; and erotic monomania is but the exaggeration or extremity of the passion of love.

Galen asserted love to be the occasion of the worst of both physical and moral disorders. The old, the young, the learned, the unlearned, the wise, and the foolish, are all exposed to its maddening influence. Sappho, for the love of Phaon, threw herself from the Leucadian promontory, so celebrated for lovers' leaps, into the sea. Tasso, Abelard and Heloise, Petrarch, and others of countless numbers, and of all conditions, have been the subjects, and many of them the victims of this monomania.

This insane love is sometimes felt for beings created by the imagination; and it has even fixed itself upon the beautiful productions of the sculptor. Alchidas, of Rhodes, became enamored of the Cupid of Praxiteles; and we have instances in more recent times, where the flame of love has been enkindled by the cold marble. Most usually, however, this sentiment, in all its shades, is felt for living flesh and blood, being either sudden, or of slower growth.

The subjects of erotic monomania, like other monomaniacs, have their thoughts and affections all centred upon a single object, and the more they are opposed, the more fixed and obstinate do they become. They are ready to abandon all that is dear in life, as friends, kindred, rank, fortune, social propriety, and even character itself, and to attempt the most hazardous and difficult acts, under the

influence of their one controlling sentiment. Hope, fear, joy, rage, jealousy, may alternately, or together, agitate the breasts of these unfortunate beings. Or raving mania even may occasionally supervene, leading, in despair of obtaining the beloved object, to suicide, or homicide, and sometimes to both.

This form of monomania, however, is not always thus apparent, but strives to conceal itself through a deceptive guise, and then it becomes even the more dangerous and fatal in its consequences. Here its subjects grow sad, melancholy, silent; lose their appetite and complexion, emaciate, fall into a sort of hectic, ending perhaps in death. The following familiar lines of Shakspeare well depict this secret and wasting form of erotic melancholy:

> "She never told her love,
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek: she pin'd in thought;
> And, with a green and yellow melancholy,
> She sat like patience on a monument,
> Smiling at grief."

Concealed erotic melancholy is not rare in those of delicate, susceptive and romantic natures, and whose education has been effeminate and voluptuous, and in such will sometimes prove fatal, either directly, or, what is more common, by exciting into action some other disease, as consumption, to which there had existed a prior disposition.*

* Esquirol, in his treatise on Insanity has described this love-

Dr. Zimmermann tells us that love properly belongs to the melancholy passions, and says it "acts suddenly and with violence, because of all passions it is the most impatient, and the least susceptible of control; sometimes, however, it is more slow in its progress, and, like intense grief, gradually undermines the constitution. The more general effects of this tender passion are a tremulous pulse, deep sighs, an alternate glow and paleness of the cheeks, dejection, loss of appetite, a faltering speech, cold sweats, and watchfulness, which gradually terminate in consumption, or perhaps occasion insanity."*

The subjects of this morbidly refined and romantic imagination—to resume my principal topic—are generally characterized by strong and excitable feelings, but which are, for the most part, more ready to respond to ideal than real influences. Truth, in its naked guise, unpurified from the feculencies of the world, is too homely and offensive for such spiritualized beings. The squalid and unromantic beggar, perishing of cold or hunger in his wretched hovel, is an object quite too gross and disgusting to harmonize with their fastidious sensibilities. It is elegant, refined, and sentimental misery only, that can elicit their artificial sympathies. Their love, too—a passion to which, as I have before intimated, they are so exceedingly susceptible—discovers the same exquisite refinement, and is therefore most

madness, under the name of erotomania, and to his account of it, I have to acknowledge myself not a little indebted.

* On Experience in Physic.

apt to fix itself on some ideal model of beauty and excellence. Or should their affections become linked to a carnal nature, such attachment will most commonly proceed from the false coloring and bright associations with which the imagination clothes it. Hence the well-known fickleness and caprice of such persons, and their disappointment with all veritable objects on familiarity, since all must fall short of their high-wrought fictitious standards. Many a poet, through his whole life, has remained constant in his devotion to some peerless idol of his own beautiful imagination. How, indeed, can it be expected that one accustomed to dwell on the pure and transcendental creations of a delicate and sublimated fancy, can contemplate with pleasure, or, I may even say without disgust, the coarseness and imperfection which so necessarily appertain to our earth-born nature?

The feelings, unduly excited, as they always are, by the wild dreams of the imagination, react with a morbid influence on the various functions of the body, and if the habits are at the same time sedentary and recluse, a train of moral and physical infirmities, generalized under the name of nervous temperament, will, in all likelihood, be the result. The subjects of this unhappy temperament, are commonly irresolute, capricious, and unnaturally sensitive in their feelings. Their passions, whether pleasurable or painful, are awakened with the greatest facility, and the most trifling causes will often elate them with hope, or sink them in despondency. A deep enthusiasm generally marks their character, and they not unfrequently

display a high order of talent, and a nice and discriminating taste, yet mingled with all those uncomfortable eccentricities which are so apt to accompany superior endowments. The poet, the painter, the musician—for their pursuits have all a kindred nature, and all work on the feelings and imagination—are more especially the subjects of this peculiar temperament. The nervous sensibility of poets has been proverbial even from the remotest time, and it is therefore that they have been styled, genus irritabile vatum. "The occupations of a poet," says Dr. Currie in his life of Robert Burns, "are not calculated to strengthen the governing powers of the mind, or to weaken that sensibility which requires perpetual control, since it gives birth to the vehemence of passion, as well as to the higher powers of imagination. Unfortunately the favorite occupations of genius are calculated to increase all its peculiarities, to nourish that lofty pride which disdains the littleness of prudence and the restrictions of order; and by indulgence to increase that sensibility, which, in the present form of our existence, is scarcely compatible with peace or happiness, even when accompanied with the choicest gifts of fortune."

The physical functions in this temperament are almost always weak, and pass very readily into disordered states. Its subjects are particularly liable to indigestion, and to sympathetic disturbances in the nervous, circulating, and respiratory systems. Thus, under sudden excitements, palpitations, flushings of the face, tremors, embarrassment in the respiration, with difficulty of speaking, are apt to oc-

cur, and even syncope or fainting will sometimes take place. The body, moreover, is generally spare and feeble, frequently with an inclination forwards; the face is pale and sickly, though, under excitement, readily assuming a hectic glow, and its expression is usually of a pensive character.

The most melancholy nervous affections, as epilepsy, for example, have sometimes been brought on through the workings of an unnaturally exalted and ungoverned imagination. And, in turn, the most enravishing conceits of fancy have at times been experienced while laboring under such disorders. It is in fits of epilepsy, and ecstatic trances, that religious enthusiasts have had their celestial visions, which their distempered minds have often converted into realities. The visits of the angel Gabriel to Mahomet, and the journey of this prophet through the seven heavens, under the guidance of the same angel, might not unlikely have taken place in some of the epileptic paroxysms, to which he is well known to have been subject.

The imagination, then, exercising so decided an influence on our moral feelings and conduct, and by a requisite consequence, on our health and happiness, we perceive how important it is that this faculty be wisely disciplined, or regulated according to the standard of nature,—that it be maintained in strict obedience to the judgment and will, and those delusive fancies in which the human mind is so prone to indulge, be carefully suppressed: since not only do they withdraw us from the rational ends and practical duties of life—thereby rendering us less useful both

to ourselves and to society—but tend also to break down the physical energies, and prepare the constitution for the ingress of disease, and for untimely dissolution. The mind, as well as the body, let it be remembered, may be feasted too voluptuously. The delights of a fantastic paradise have little harmony with our present nature. The spirit,

> ——" whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in,"

must forego the raptures of supernal visions, and accommodate itself to its material relations—to the circumstances and necessities of its earthly dwelling-house.

We unfortunately meet with some writers, who, being themselves the subjects of this fanciful temperament, would persuade us to seek enjoyment in the cultivation of morbid sensibilities, to the exclusion of the more wholesome realities of life. Thus, says that popular and exquisitely sentimental author, Zimmermann, "To suffer with so much softness and tranquillity; to indulge in tender sorrow without knowing why, and still to prefer retirement; to love the lonely margin of a limpid lake; to wander alone upon broken rocks, in deep caverns, in dreary forests; to feel no pleasure but in the sublime and beautiful of nature, in those beauties which the world despise; to desire the company of only one other being to whom we may communicate the sensations of the soul, who would participate in all our pleasures, and forget every thing else in the universe; this is a condition for which every young man

ought to wish, who wishes to fly from the merciless approaches of a cold, contentless old age." *

Among the best securities against this prejudicial ascendency of the fancy, and those uncomfortable nervous infirmities which so generally attend it, may be advised a life of active and regular employment, directed to some interesting object. It would seem, indeed, necessary to the health and contentment of the human mind, at least in its cultivated state, that it should be constantly actuated by some prominent and engaging motive,—by the feeling that existence has a determinate purpose. The subjection, also, of the impulses of the imagination to a wise restraint; and the strengthening of the judgment and powers of volition by the prosecution of the exact or demonstrative sciences, such as have truth for their great and ultimate aim; and, in addition, all those means which tend to sustain and elevate the bodily health, and thus to impart vigor to the nervous system,—as pure air, muscular exercise, cold bathing, and temperance in its widest acceptation.

Finally, to guard ourselves from the aforenamed moral infirmities, and their concomitant physical ills, we should cultivate a contented spirit, confining our wishes and expectations within the limits of reason; and especially striving against the morbid growth of ambition, which, when from the temperament, or other circumstances of the individual, it does not impel to active efforts for its gratifica-

* On Solitude.

tion, will cause the mind to be ever wandering amid visionary scenes of wealth and honor, and thus wholly disqualify it for its appointed sphere of action and enjoyments. Avoiding all eccentricities—keeping along in the beaten track of existence—pursuing with regularity, and a suitable degree of interest, the duties which belong to our several stations,—such is the course which would, probably, on the whole, be most conformable to physical and moral health, and enjoyment. The burs and briers of life are oftenest encountered when we wander from its trodden paths.

CHAP. XXIX.

GENERAL CONCLUSION.—THE INTELLECTUAL OPERATIONS A FAR LESS FREQUENT OCCASION OF DISEASE THAN THE PASSIONS.—EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE INFLUENCE EXERCISED BY THE MIND UPON THE BODILY FUNCTIONS.—CASE OF COL. TOWNSHEND, WHO COULD DIE AND COME TO LIFE AGAIN AT PLEASURE.—OUR PHYSICAL INTEREST DEMANDS A VIRTUOUS REGULATION OF THE MORAL FEELINGS.—SELF-RELIANCE AND STRONG VOLITION ESSENTIAL TO THE PERFECTION OF HEALTH AND CHARACTER.—MORAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN SHOULD BE EARLY COMMENCED.—DUTIES OF PARENTS.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I HAVE maintained in the first part of this volume, that the exercise of the intellectual functions, abstractly considered, does not tend, on a general principle, to favor disease, or shorten life. Yet exceptions arise where simple intellectual labors are urged to an injurious degree. In the reports of lunatic asylums we almost always find some of the cases ascribed to excess of study. I am convinced, however, that a larger share, both of mental and bodily ills, than rigorous truth will warrant, is referred to immoderate exertion of the intellect; the reasons of which error have been previously

explained. Thus, our intellectual efforts are, at the present day, almost always associated with those habits of life, as undue confinement, insufficient and irregular sleep, and other like incidental circumstances, which are well known to be detrimental to health. And furthermore, as knowledge is seldom pursued for its own sake, but for some ulterior advantage, either of fame, or pecuniary profit, mental labors are rarely unaccompanied with the workings, even the strong and painful workings of passion. Intellectual men, it must be admitted, are, either by nature or the force of circumstances, particularly prone to ambition, and are consequently exposed to those various evils and sufferings, already mentioned, which attend upon this passion when it becomes a ruling one in the human breast. If moderate and obedient to reason, and its aims guided by wisdom, it may, as I have previously said, serve as an incentive to call into useful and wholesome exertion the different powers of our nature; but when inordinate, as it is so apt to become, then will feelings of the most painful and destructive character unavoidably grow out of it.

Our own literary and scientific men, those of the learned professions, for example, will furnish ample illustration of the truth of the preceding remarks. How restless, often, and anxious, are their struggles in pursuit of a little ephemeral notoriety! To what various expedients do we not see them resorting for the sake even of that brief and equivocal fame derived through the columns of the periodical press? But, then, as the flattery of success may not always reward their endeavors; as they may meet the shafts of cen-

sure where they looked for the blandishments of praise, frequently must the painful and noxious passions, born of defeated hope and wounded pride, such as anger, hate, jealousy, grief, humiliation, take possession of the soul, marring all life's moral peace, and calling forth a host of physical ills, as indigestions, nervous disorders, palpitations, and all sorts of irregularities of the heart's action, rendering existence burdenous, and shortening its term.

The intellectual exertions themselves, then, we rationally conclude, are less a source of evil than the incidental circumstances so commonly united with them; and that those mental labors are always the most harmless which have the least tendency to call forth deep and morbid feeling.

It is, however, to the moral feelings that we are to look for a strongly marked—an undeniable influence on the bodily functions; for this reason have we appropriated to their consideration so much the larger share of the present volume.

The mind is never agitated by any strong affection without a sensible change immediately ensuing in some one or more of the vital phenomena; and which, according to its nature, or the circumstances under which it occurs, may be either morbid or sanative in its effects, in the same manner as in the action of strictly physical agents—the various medicaments for example. Mental emotions, when curative, operate mostly, it is to be presumed, on the principle generally admitted in medical science called revulsion; that is, by calling forth new and ascendant actions in the animal

economy, they repress or destroy the distempered ones already existing. It is no more strange, then, that the passions should, through their influence on our physical organization, be capable of engendering or subduing morbid phenomena, than that agents essentially material in their nature should possess such power. We have instances on record, where, by the simple effort of the will the heart's action could be directly arrested, and restored again by the same power of volition; in other words, where the individual could, to all appearance, die, and revive again at his pleasure. One of the most remarkable and best authenticated examples of this direct power of the mind over the vital functions, is that of the Hon. Colonel Townshend, related by Dr. George Cheyne, which, as it may not be familiar to the general reader, I will venture to cite in the present connection.

Colonel Townshend, being affected with a nephritic complaint, was attended by Dr. Cheyne and Dr. Baynard. One morning he sent early for his physicians to visit him, who waited upon him with Mr. Skrine, his apothecary. "We found," says Dr. Cheyne, "his senses clear, and his mind calm; his nurse and several servants were about him. He had made his will and settled his affairs. He told us he had sent for us to give him some account of an odd sensation he had for some time observed and felt in himself: which was, that composing himself, he could die or expire when he pleased, and yet by an effort, or somehow, he could come to life again; which it seems he had sometimes tried before he had sent for us. We heard this with surprise,

but as it was not to be accounted for from now common principles, we could hardly believe the fact as he related it, much less give any account of it, unless he should please to make the experiment before us, which we were unwilling he should do, lest in his weak condition he might carry it too far. He continued to talk very distinctly and sensibly above a quarter of an hour about this (to him) surprising sensation, and insisted so much on our seeing the trial made that we were at last forced to comply. We all three felt his pulse first; it was distinct, though small and thready; and his heart had its usual beating. He composed himself on his back, and lay in a still posture some time; while I held his right hand, Dr. Baynard laid his hand on his heart, and Mr. Skrine held a clean looking-glass to his mouth. I found his pulse sink gradually, till at last I could not feel any, by the most exact and nice touch; Dr. Baynard could not feel the least motion in his heart, nor Mr. Skrine the least soil of breath on the bright mirror he held to his mouth; then each of us by turns examined his arm, heart, and breath, but could not, by the nicest scrutiny, discover the least symptom of life in him. We reasoned a long time about this odd appearance, as well as we could, and all of us, judging it inexplicable and unaccountable, and finding he still continued in that condition, we began to conclude that he had indeed carried the experiment too far, and at last were satisfied he was actually dead, and were just ready to leave him. This continued about half an hour, by nine o'clock in the morning, in autumn. As we were going away, we observed some motion about the

body, and upon examination, found his pulse and the motion of his heart gradually returning: he began to breathe gently and speak softly: we were all astonished to the last degree at this unexpected change, and after some further conversation with him, and among ourselves, went away fully satisfied as to all the particulars of this fact, but confounded and puzzled, and not able to form any rational scheme that might account for it. He afterwards called for his attorney, added a codicil to his will, settled legacies on his servants, received the sacrament, and calmly and composedly expired about five or six o'clock that evening." *

Hundreds of instances might be adduced to prove the force of the imagination, or, more properly, of the moral feelings which it awakens, in altering and controlling physical actions. Such influence, it seems to me, was strikingly illustrated by the novel surgical operation which, some years since, excited so strong, though transient an interest, for the cure of stammering. The different operations that were tried in this country, for the removal of such imperfection, were acupuncturation, or the passage of several slender needles transversely through the tongue; the excision of a portion of the uvula, and also of the tonsils; the division of the frænum of the tongue; and, lastly, and the one most trusted to, the separation of the genio-hyo-glossus muscle at its origin from the lower jaw. I repeatedly witnessed the trial of each of these operations, and the sudden and surprising relief which usually followed. Stammerers of

* English Malady, p. 307 et seq. London: 1733.

the worst class, so soon as the operation was finished, would frequently talk and read with scarcely any, and, in some instances, not the slightest hesitation or embarrassment. In truth, the success of the experiment was, as I thought, most remarkable where the impediment was the greatest. Unfortunately, however, for the credit of experimental surgery, although some submitted to each of the operations, and even to their repetition, the benefit resulting was merely temporary, and in no instance that came within my knowledge, was there a decided and lasting cure. May we not, now, ascribe the remarkable effects of these bloody experiments chiefly, if not entirely, to the strong influence which they exercised upon the mental feelings?

Dr. Paris in his Pharmacologia has recorded an instance related to him by Mr. Coleridge, strongly illustrative of the physical effects of the imagination. When the peculiar action of the exhilarating gas (protoxide of nitrogen, or nitrous oxide) upon the nervous system was first discovered, it was inferred by Dr. Beddoes that it must necessarily be a specific for palsy, and a patient was therefore selected for the trial, and the management of it intrusted to Sir Humphrey Davy. "Previous to the administration of the gas, he inserted a small pocket thermometer under the tongue of the patient, as he was accustomed to do on such occasions, to ascertain the degree of animal temperature, with a view to future comparison. The paralytic man, wholly ignorant of the nature of the process to which he was to submit, but deeply impressed, from the representation of Dr. Beddoes, with the certainty of its success, no

sooner felt the thermometer under his tongue than he concluded the talisman was in full operation, and in a burst of enthusiasm declared that he already experienced the effect of its benign influence throughout his whole body. The opportunity was too tempting to be lost; Davy cast an intelligent glance at Coleridge, and desired his patient to renew his visit on the following day, when the same ceremony was performed, and repeated every succeeding day for a fortnight, the patient gradually improving during that period, when he was dismissed as cured, no other application having been used."

I have known persons from breathing atmospheric air, under the impression that it was nitrous oxide, to experience the same effects as though they had actually inhaled the latter. Let one direct his attention strongly and exclusively to a particular part of the body, and an uncomfortable sensation will not rarely be felt in that part. It is through the power of his fancy that the hypochondriac suffers such various and changeful morbid sensations in different portions of his frame. Chills and shuddering will many times begin to be experienced on the bare thoughts of an ague-fit through which one has recently passed. The phenomena of mesmerism, the subjects of which have generally feeble wills, and great nervous susceptibility, are doubtless often produced, like hysteria and other kindred nervous disorders, through the influence of the imagination.

Having regard but to the laws of our present organization, it seems to me that no truth can be more plain than

that pure and well-regulated moral affections are essential to the greatest good of the whole animal economy,—that the turbulent and evil passions must necessarily corrupt the sources of our physical, moral, and intellectual health, and thus be followed by heavy penalties to the general constitution. Even our physical interest, separate from any other motive, demands the cultivation of the good, and the restraint of the evil passions of our nature.

"He," says an old medical writer, "who seriously resolves to preserve his health, must previously learn to conquer his passions, and keep them in absolute subjection to reason; for, let a man be ever so temperate in his diet, and regular in his exercise, yet still some unhappy passions, if indulged to excess, will prevail over all his regularity, and prevent the good effects of his temperance. It is necessary, therefore, that he should be upon his guard against an influence so destructive."*

Nor did this close connection between a virtuous regulation of the moral feelings and the health of the body, escape the observation of Doctor Franklin's sagacious intellect. "Virtue," says this sententious writer, "is the best preservative of health, as it prescribes temperance, and such a regulation of our passions as is most conducive to the well-being of the animal economy; so that it is, at the same time, the only true happiness of the mind, and the best means of preserving the health of the body."

* The History of Health, and the Art of Preserving it. By James Mackenzie, M. D., &c.

The ancient sages who wrote upon the philosophy of health, dwelt especially on the importance of a prudent government of the affections. Galen urged that the mind should be early trained up in virtuous habits, particularly in modesty and obedience, as the most summary method of insuring the health of the body in future life.

It has been said, and truly said, that a soul which maintains a certain empire over the body it animates, may also be of infinite use in preserving life and health. It is self-reliance, now, united with a strong will, that gives this dominion to the soul, and thereby contributes a wholesome influence to all the functions of our being. Were it required of me to determine the mental qualities which should be particularly fostered and strengthened, in reference to health, happiness, and the force and perfection of human character, I should name self-reliance and volition; for if these are feeble, weakness and effeminacy, moral and physical, are the almost unavoidable consequences. But are they, let me ask, sufficiently encouraged and enforced in the present times? Is it not according to the spirit of the age to resign, in too great a measure, our own self-dependence, and to blend and confound ourselves with the collective masses? Have we a proper sense of our individuality? Do we not act too much in the aggregate—live too much under the direction of general ideas? It certainly appears to me that in this age we do not rely enough on our particular judgment and energies. We fear to stand on our own independent footing, as units,—self-acting, self-thinking units. We must have the support of authorities, of public senti-

ment; we must ascertain, not whether our thoughts and our acts are right or wrong, but whether they square with the opinions and conduct of the world. Foregoing our own individuality, we become dependent and subordinate parts of the aggregative body. "Amidst the progress of public liberty," as an eminent French writer has observed, "many seem to have lost the proud and invigorating sentiment of their own personal liberty." Such may have, and doubtless has had some advantages, yet it is not without its evils, opposed, as it must be, to the concentration of individual power—individual endeavors. Has any thing truly great, supremely excellent, ever been accomplished in the world,—has any really important discovery ever been made in the arts and sciences,—any master-works in literature ever been produced, unless mainly as the offspring of single minds? Newton discovered the laws of gravitation—wrote his Principia, not as one of a collective assembly, but by the force of his own unaided intellect. Bacon called in the assistance of no other mind in the composition of his Novum Organon. Harvey, of himself—not as one of a joint company, or convocation, or committee of a convocation—discovered the circulation of the blood. The unrivalled productions of Shakspeare were the outpourings of his own unhelped genius. And Franklin alone first drew the lightnings of heaven down to earth. And so do I believe that every thing of magnitude, every discovery that is destined to elevate man's nature, and man's condition, is to proceed from the strength of individual genius—individual intellect.

We should never learn to walk securely if we always leaned on others; we should never reach the fulness of our powers while we trusted to foreign aidance; and little could we ever bring to pass, if afraid to think and act for ourselves.

Let me here for a moment urge the importance of beginning early (it can scarce be commenced too early) the moral education of children. Every day that this is neglected will the baneful feelings of their nature be acquiring additional force and obstinacy. It is in their very germ, in the weakness of their birth, that these are to be successfully combated. We are, as previously alleged, the subjects of moral feeling, and therefore of moral discipline, at an age by far earlier that is usually imagined. That many children suffer in their health, and oftentimes to no slight extent, under the repeated and severe operation of passions which parents have neglected to reprove, is a truth too plain for contradiction. And not only have they to undergo present suffering from such unpardonable remissness, but not unfrequently does it become the cause of an afflictive train of infirmities, both of mind and body, in their future years; and experience, it may be of the most painful nature, must teach them to bring under control feelings which should have been repressed in the impotence of their origin. "We frequently," says Mr. Locke, "see parents, by humoring them when little, corrupt the principles of nature in their children, and wonder afterwards to taste the bitter waters when they themselves have poisoned the fountain."*

* On Education.

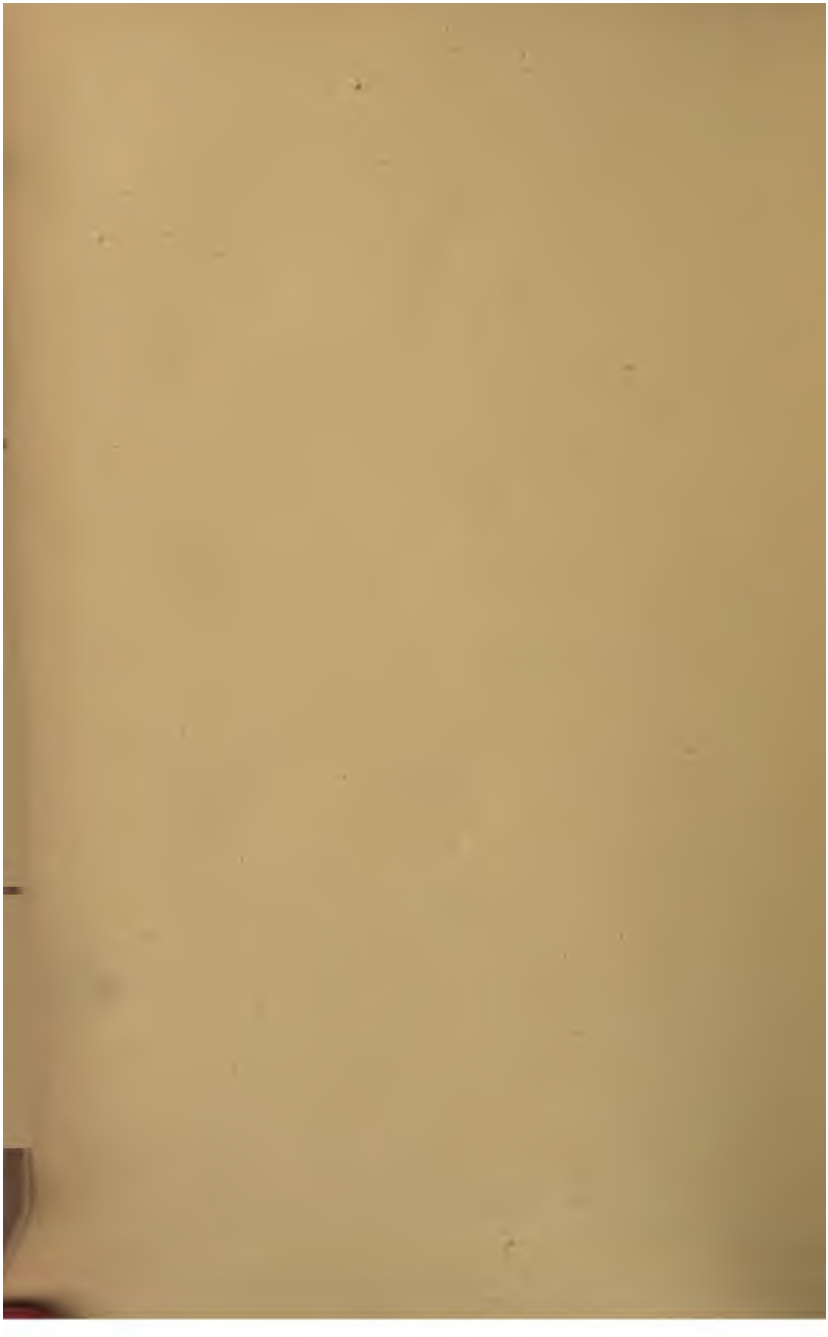
No duties or obligations have been more often or eloquently enforced both by the moralist and divine, than those of the child to the parent; and I would not say aught that might serve in any degree to weaken their deep and binding character. Still, it appears to me, that those due from the parent to the child are really of a paramount nature, and that more serious consequences will be hazarded by their omission. Our parents bestow, or impose existence upon us, and are therefore bound, in the most solemn duty, to spare no sacrifice, to omit no efforts, which may contribute to render that existence a blessing. If, through their culpable neglect and mismanagement, they entail upon us a host of mental and bodily ills, we owe them little gratitude for the life with which they have burdened us.

When we consider the carelessness and misjudgment so often exhibited in the early training of the young—how many children are literally educated by example, if not by precept, to falsehood, hypocrisy, pusillanimity, and intemperance in its broadest sense; in short, how many moral and physical vices are allowed to ingraft themselves in the constitution even in the dawn of its development, we are led almost to wonder that human nature does not grow up even more corrupt than we actually find it.

In concluding the present volume I would again urge the high importance, to the whole living economy, at all periods of our existence, of a prudent government of the moral constitution. Man, unrestrained by discipline, or abandoned to the turbulence of unbridled passion, is pitiable and degraded indeed. The fountains of his health

and enjoyment are corrupted, and all that is comely and elevated in his nature marred and debased. His whole life, in short, becomes but a succession of painful mental and physical strugglings and commotions,—a torment equally to himself and all around him.

> "Of all God's workes, which doe this worlde adorne,
> There is no one more faire and excellent,
> Than is man's body both for powre and forme,
> Whiles it is kept in sober government;
> But none than it more fowle and indecent,
> Distempred though misrule and passions bace."

But although the passions appointed to us, are so prolific of evil—so fruitful a source of disease, sorrow, and ignominy—yet fortunately they are the subjects of education, and, as when uncontrolled they become the bane and reproach of our nature, under a wise restraint and watchful culture they may be rendered our richest blessing and fairest ornament.

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